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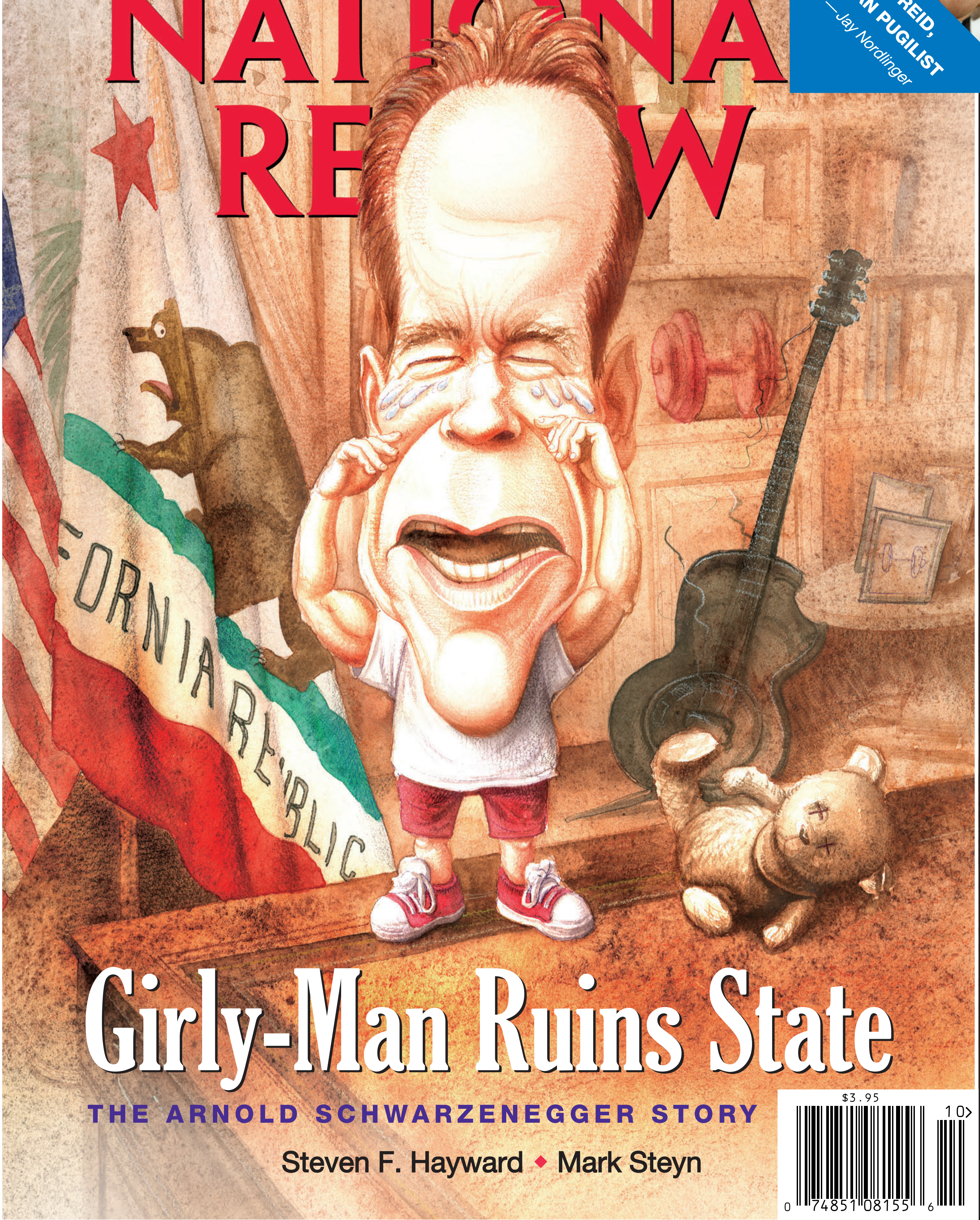

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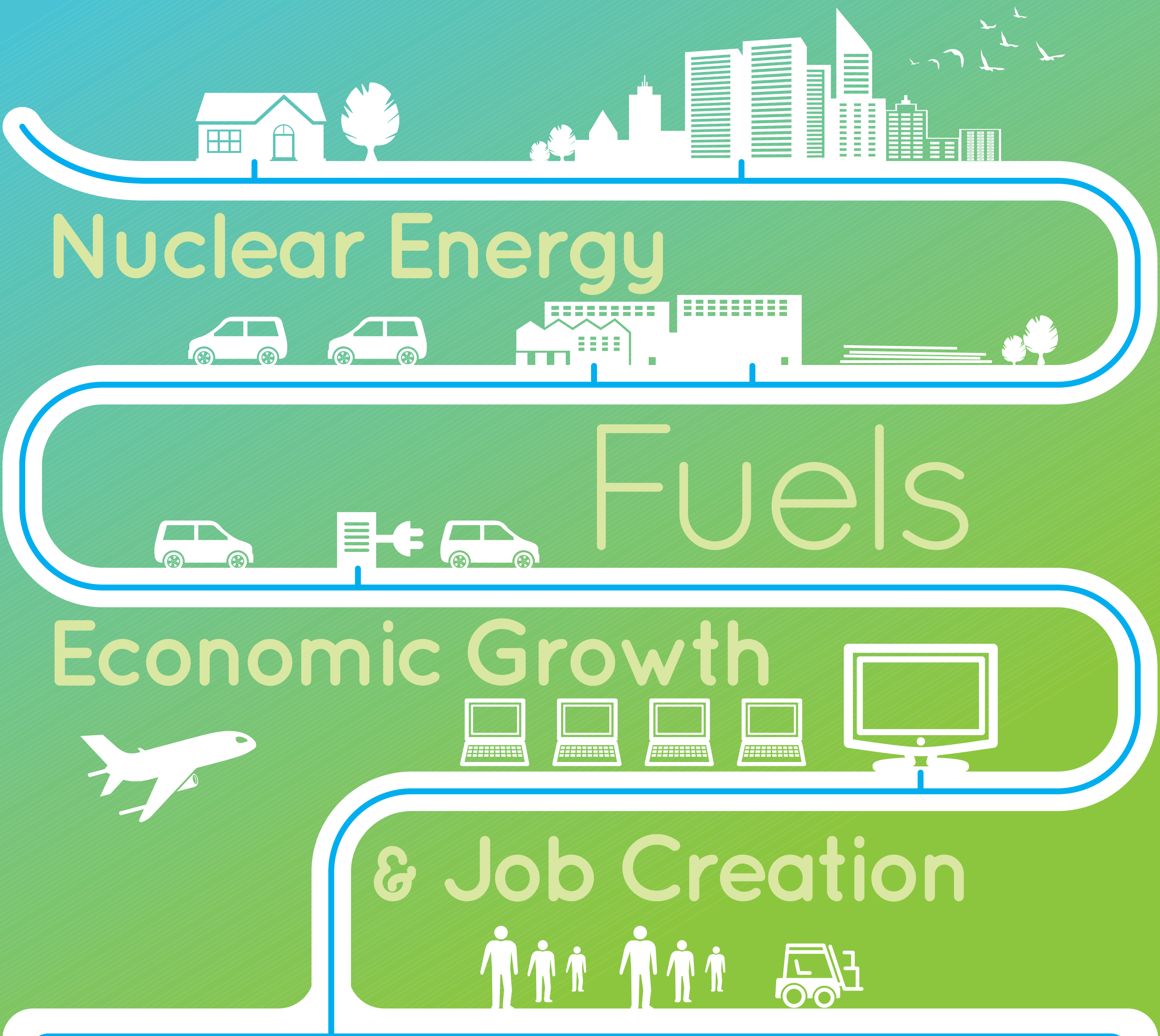

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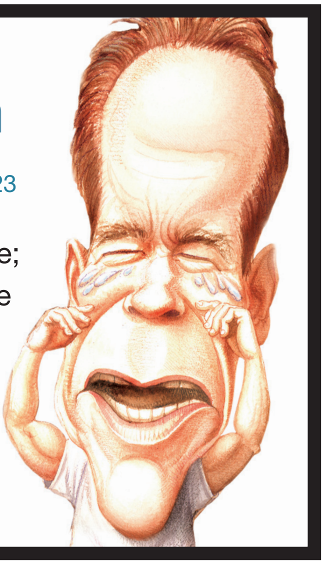

In fiscal matters Arnold Schwarzenegger has governed more like a Keynesian than a Friedmanite; in regulatory affairs, he governs more like a German socialist than an Austrian-school liberal. Today he is as much of an albatross for California Republicans as George W. Bush was on the national scene. *Steven F. Hayward*

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Letters

Living Inspiration

Thank you for Jay Nordlinger's article on Capt. Ivan Castro ("Captain Extraordinary," February 9). Captain Castro is a tremendously inspiring man. I had the honor of meeting him while running the Air Force Marathon in Dayton last September, and of hearing him speak at the dinner the night before.

He spoke briefly about his injuries, then thanked the soldiers who risked their lives to save him while still under fire, the helicopter crew that came in despite the tremendous risk, and all the doctors, nurses, therapists, etc., who worked to help him heal. Not a drop of self-pity in evidence.

If God's plan is to have him inspire others to do their best, count their blessings, and selflessly help others, He has the best man for the job.

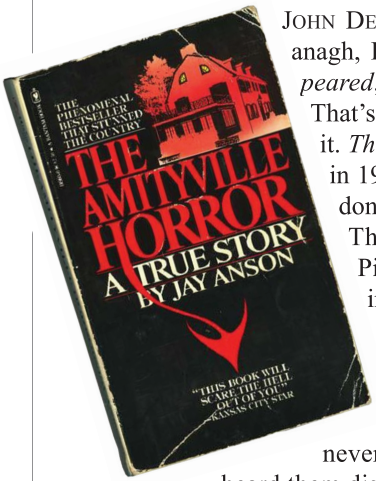
James F. Murphy
Chicago, Ill.

Very Superstitious

When I read John Derbyshire's piece indicating that "interest in the occult has faded" ("Chance of a Ghost," February 9), I wondered whether he is in touch with current entertainment trends. A quick scan of the TV listings reveals shows such as *Medium*, *Ghost Whisperer*, *Ghost Hunters*, *Paranormal State*, and *Ghost Hunters International*. Psychics such as John Edward and Lisa Williams pack auditoriums during their worldwide tours.

Not much of a fade.

James Cavanagh
Naples, Fla.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John Derbyshire replies: With all respect to Mr. Cavanagh, I didn't say that interest in the occult has *disappeared*, I said it has *faded* since the mid-20th century. That's my judgment—impressionistic, but I'll stand by it. *The Search for Bridey Murphy* was a huge bestseller in 1956, *The Amityville Horror* a lesser one in 1977. I don't think books like that make the lists nowadays. The nearest recent equivalent I can find is Don Piper's *90 Minutes in Heaven*, but that's Christian-inspirational, not occult.

Similarly with TV. Where, in the hundred-odd channels offered by my cable service, can I find a current equivalent of the ingeniously spooky stories in *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*? I have never heard of the shows Mr. Cavanagh mentions, nor heard them discussed; they are not visible in TV popularity ratings (though admittedly the advent of cable has scrambled the ratings business). Similarly, I wish John Edward and Lisa Williams all the luck in the world, but I had never heard of either until today. That the occult is still around, I know; that it has anything like the hold on our attention it had 50 years ago, I am sure is not the case.

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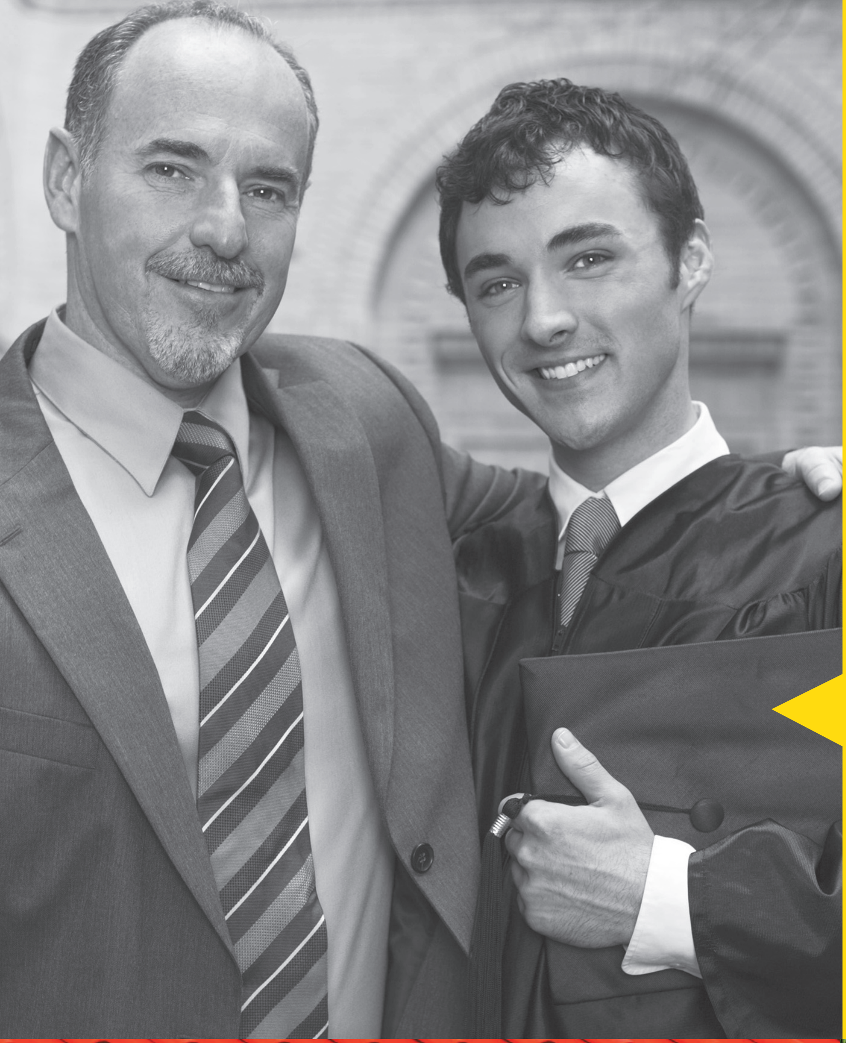

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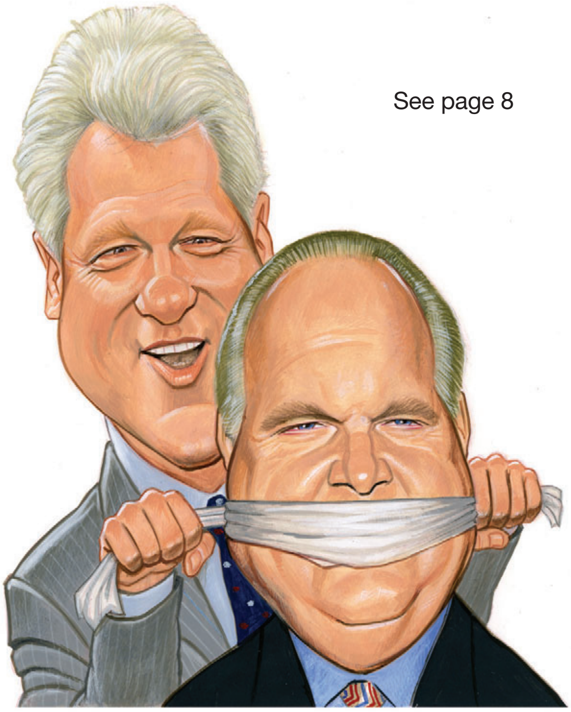
The Week



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ISMAEL ROLDAN

■ One thousand pages of stimulus legislation, a few hours to read it: It's change you'll just have to take his word for.

■ The Democrats have made a number of personnel blunders, Republicans have mostly held together against the stimulus, and the public shows little confidence that the stimulus will save the economy. Republicans are taking comfort from these developments. Too much comfort, actually. Obama's cabinet difficulties have not reduced his popularity. The public, far from associating Republicans with superior alternatives to the stimulus, rates the party's handling of the issue unfavorably—especially compared with that of the president. The Republicans' unity is a real accomplishment, but they should save the high fives for later.

■ We at NATIONAL REVIEW believed that the Senate should seat Roland Burris, Barack Obama's successor, despite the corruption of Illinois governor Rod Blagojevich, the man who appointed him, on the grounds that Burris himself was untainted by sleaze. Did we speak too soon? On January 8, Burris told an impeachment panel of the Illinois legislature that he had had no contact with Blago's brother Robert. But on February 5 (three weeks after being sworn in to the Senate), he gave a supplementary affidavit to the impeachment panel admitting that, yes, he had spoken with Brother Blagojevich three times in October and November. Burris then claimed he had refused to do any money-raising for Blagojevich, and insisted he simply hadn't gotten a chance to tell the impeachment panel the whole story. But it later emerged that he had indeed tried—unsuccessfully—to raise money for Rod, at Robert's request. Illinois politicians are saying that Burris perjured himself (he spoke to the impeachment panel under oath). He hangs by a thread. If anything else emerges—other Blago talk, a dime of money changing hands—he's a goner.

■ Everything about Sen. Judd Gregg's recent turn in the spotlight was odd. It was odd that the conservative New Hampshire Republican—a tax cutter, spending cutter, and stimulus skeptic—would accept President Obama's offer to serve in the cabinet as commerce secretary. Odd, too, that he would then reverse course and explain that he had only just realized that his philosophy would make it impossible for him to join the president's team. The senator is highly regarded by his colleagues, who seem to share our puzzlement at this flaky behavior.

■ Politicians like to say the only poll that matters is the one taken on Election Day. If what are thought to be Obama's desires are met, the Census Bureau will "sample" Americans rather than count them in 2010. This is nothing but a glorified public-opinion survey, though it could have profound political consequences. For the GOP, most of them are bad. The fundamental idea is that because some people are difficult to locate with precision—the homeless, illegal aliens, etc.—the government's bean counters won't bother to try. Instead, they will strive to identify some fraction of total population, perhaps 90 percent. Then they will log their findings into computer models, mix them with demographic projections, add two cups of sheer guesswork, and shake vigorously. Advocates of the practice will claim to have produced a "scientifically" accurate census, even though it will be full of phantoms whose existence can't be proved. Many will be said to hail from urban areas. If the census treats them as flesh-and-blood people, they will tip the apportionment of seats in the House of Representatives toward Democrat-heavy districts. Bill Clinton tried to pull this stunt in the 1990s, but congressional Republicans were able to stop him. Obama's determination to succeed where his predecessor failed became obvious when, during the short-lived cabinet nomination of Gregg, he ordered the Census Bureau to report directly to the White House rather than to the secretary of commerce. The president and the Democrats don't want an actual enumeration: They want a poll, followed by a statistical gerrymander.

■ David Lloyd George once dismissed an irresolute rival thus: "Like a cushion, he always bore the impress of the last man who sat on him." Kirsten Gillibrand of New York has not yet even warmed the cushion of her Senate seat but already is conforming to the shape of she who sat in it before. Until about two minutes ago, Gillibrand held reasonably conservative positions on immigration and gun control (NRA rating: A) but abandoned her principles upon arrival in the Senate. Having got on the wrong side of the Kennedy clan by securing the Senate spot that Caroline Kennedy took for her patrimony, Gillibrand may fear a primary

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challenge. So she's gone from categorical opposition to an amnesty for illegals to "path to citizenship" talk. (First step on the traditional path to citizenship: Don't break the immigration laws.) She's gone from endorsing civil unions to supporting gay marriage. And her formerly full-bore support for the right to keep and bear arms has become meek endorsement of "hunters' rights," as though the Founders wrote the Second Amendment because they fretted about the deer population in Oscawana Corners. There's a certain pleasing symmetry here, though: Hillary Clinton adopted New York for reasons of political expedience; now a New Yorker is adopting Clinton's positions for the same reason.

■ As predicted, General Motors and Chrysler need more money. GM says it needs $12 billion in addition to the $18 billion it has already asked for, and Chrysler wants another $2 billion on top of its $7 billion request. GM announced that it plans to eliminate 47,000 jobs this year, while Chrysler's Hail Mary pass entails the addition of electric vehicles, those proven moneymakers, to its product line. GM still has not reached an agreement with its bondholders to reduce the debt it cannot pay, and neither company has struck a deal with the United Auto Workers that would allow Detroit to stay viable. It is clear that these parties will remain deadlocked as long as the government is willing to keep GM and Chrysler on life support. Bankruptcy for the sickly two is the only restructuring plan that makes sense.

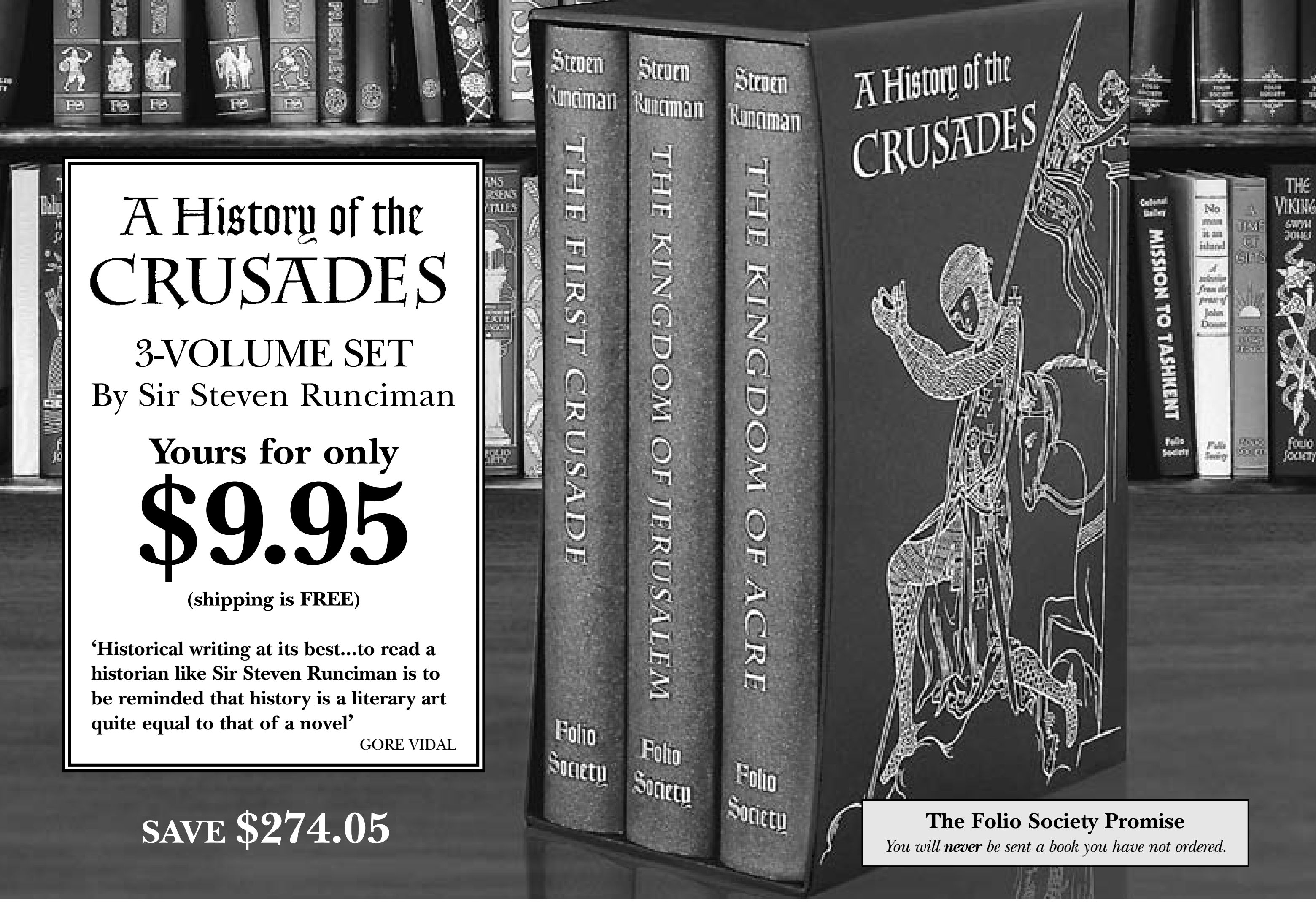
■ The U.S. government created this country's ethanol industry. First it subsidized it. Then it protected it with tariffs. Finally, after these measures failed to spark a demand for ethanol, the government mandated its use as an additive in gasoline. The mandate did the trick. Once people were actually required to buy ethanol, distilleries started popping up all over the Midwest. Then the financial crisis hit. Gasoline consumption declined as the economy slowed, meaning less demand for ethanol. Plants started going out of business every week, putting thousands of people out of work. Now the industry is asking for a $1 billion bailout to get it through these difficult times. The joke is on the American public, whose representatives set aside $20 billion for renewable-energy subsidies in the stimulus bill. Think of the ethanol industry, and remember that subsidies are just the beginning.

■ The Democrats have enacted a major expansion of the federal-state health-insurance program for children, S-CHIP. While we know that the expansion is expensive, we have no evidence that it improves children's health. In part the absence of positive outcomes is a result of the facts that S-CHIP often replaces private health insurance and that it is sometimes inferior to what it replaces. The program's other perversities include a structure that punishes beneficiaries for making economic strides and a system of subsidies that transfers money from poor states to rich ones. As a way to move the country toward national health care, on the other hand, the bill should work nicely.

■ In a closely watched case in California's Ninth Circuit federal appeals court, the Obama Justice Department reaffirmed the Bush administration's assertion of the state-secrets privilege in order to block a civil lawsuit brought on behalf of five men who claim they were kidnapped by the CIA and dispatched to countries that tortured them. Such transfers, known as "extraordinary renditions," were actually first used extensively by the Clinton administration. But the practice has been bound up with enemy-combatant detentions, military commissions, "enhanced" interrogation techniques, warrantless surveillance, and data mining in the Left's litany against Bush measures that have protected the nation from terrorist attacks. The new administration understood that the lawsuit could not go forward without endangering other countries' cooperation with our anti-terrorist efforts. It tried to soften the blow for its base by promising that Attorney General Eric Holder will review all pending state-secrets claims, but the natives are restless. Anthony Romero, executive director of the ACLU, which piloted the lawsuit, bristled that Obama had "disappointingly reneged" on his promise of state-secrets "reform," and Michael Ratner of the radical Center for Constitutional Rights lamented that "the chances of bringing a criminal case" against the Bush administration seem to be "getting lower and lower." For once, we hope Ratner is right.

■ The future of military-commission prosecutions for terrorist war crimes remains in doubt. Despite his rash campaign rhetoric, President Obama has been cautious on the national-security front, maintaining most Bush policies and conceding that many detainees who threaten U.S. security cannot be tried in civilian courts. Military prosecutors were instructed to seek a four-month adjournment of the commissions (in which 21 Guantanamo detainees are slated to be tried) while the new administration's team got up to speed. But the judge assigned to the case of USS *Cole* bomber Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri denied the request. When the president then scheduled a meeting with the families of both *Cole* and 9/11 victims, speculation ran rampant that he was about to end the commissions and transfer the cases to federal court. But the military's convening authority (which oversees commissions) intervened, dismissing the charges against Nashiri without prejudice to their later reinstatement—in some forum. When Obama met with the families, he promised swift and certain justice, but was noncommittal about the system that would mete it out. Meanwhile, the administration is exploring various alternatives, including a new legal system for processing terrorist cases. We hope Obama sees that returning to September 10 ways will get September 11 results.

■ After steering the nomination of Holder through his Judiciary Committee by giving short shrift to Holder's prior stewardship of the blatantly politicized Clinton Justice Department, Sen. Patrick Leahy promptly called for a "truth and reconciliation commission" to investigate the politicization of Bush's DOJ. Leahy wants to continue poring over Bush's firing of nine U.S. attorneys (though not the patronage-minded Clinton's firing of nearly all 92). But there is no crime, since U.S. attorneys serve at the president's pleasure; Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and his staffers were already forced from their jobs in 2007; the firings and related matters have already been thoroughly investigated by Congress and DOJ's inspector general; and the Justice Department (under Bush AG Michael Mukasey) assigned a federal prosecutor from outside Washington, who is still probing the matter. After stoking calls for a "reckoning" during the campaign, Obama and Holder have prudently voiced a preference to "look



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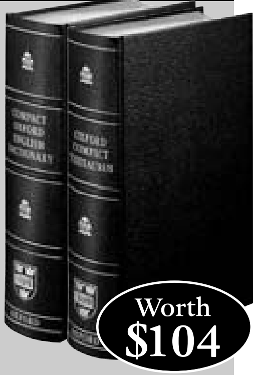

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forward, rather than back.” One might have thought Leahy, who was forced from the intelligence committee in 1987 for leaking classified information, would see the merit in that. The use of state power to investigate political adversaries is banana-republic stuff. Obama should eschew it.

■ Bill Clinton, it must be owned, has a way with words. He famously couldn’t determine what the meaning of the word *is* is, and now he defines the word *fairness* as a synonym for *censorship*. The former president is lending his voice to the choir of Democrats calling for a revival of the so-called Fairness Doctrine, which they mean to use to silence conservative talk-radio critics, Rush Limbaugh being Enemy No. 1. Clinton has a disreputable history of trying to squelch dissent, most notably trying to connect his AM tormenters with the Oklahoma City bombing. The Fairness Doctrine works like this: If anybody offers an opinion with which a sufficiently influential person disagrees, any broadcast outlet relaying that opinion is obliged to offer equal time to the aggrieved party and his views. This has the effect of stifling the expression of all non-conforming opinion, because it makes it unprofitable to broadcast anything but the blandest pabulum. And pabulum can be packed with opinion, too—cf. the *New York Times*, NPR, your average undergraduate lecture, etc.—even when passed off as The Facts. Presidents and ex-presidents used to have more pressing concerns than tyrannizing radio entertainers, and Uncle Sam has no business deciding which opinions can be broadcast, which cannot be broadcast, or which must be broadcast. The movement to censor talk radio is shameful, and it is therefore no surprise to find Clinton associated with it.

■ In 1985 Congress made it unlawful to use lead pigments in the inks, dyes, and paints in children’s books, though there was no

Smile

No sane person enjoys a global recession, particularly one that flirts with being a depression. But in the spirit of the man who asked Mrs. Lincoln, “How was the theater, beyond the obvious unpleasantness?” I join with Eric Idle of Monty Python, who proclaimed from his perch on a cross, “Always look on the bright side of life”:

If life seems jolly rotten
There’s something you’ve forgotten
And that’s to laugh and smile and dance and sing.
When you’re feeling in the dumps
Don’t be silly chumps
Just purse your lips and whistle—that’s
the thing.
And . . . always look on the bright side
of life . . .

I don’t think it’s true that there are no atheists in foxholes (never mind on crosses). But it is almost certainly true that there are fewer atheists in foxholes than there are in faculty lounges. In other words, hardship concentrates the mind on important things. One pleasant side effect of watching Barack Obama “rescue” us from an unstable and inegalitarian 21st-century prosperity and deliver us to a sustainable and renewable 13th-century model is that Americans will focus on the important things, like family and faith, and the smaller pleasures of life, such as meals around the table and the joy of hunting and killing squirrels and other local, hitherto overlooked, comestibles.

Conservatives defend free markets with gusto, but no conservative has to defend everything the market produces. While this is obvious when it comes to, say, violent hardcore pornography or Michael Flatley, Lord of the Dance, it is less obvious with the more mundane effluvia of commerce. For instance, it strikes me as no tragedy that Starbucks will have to abandon its goal of providing one franchise for every man, woman, and child in America. There will be no net increase in suburban blight if these overpriced java hubs are no longer cattywampus to each other at every American intersection and get replaced by businesses owned by local residents eager to satisfy local tastes, such as regional versions of succulent squirrel recipes.

For all the *agita* caused by plummeting home prices, it is worth remembering that while homeowners may be losing wealth, home *buyers* are gaining opportunities. Who can do anything but rejoice at the news that people who, just months ago, could never afford to be your neighbors can now purchase the most expensive home on the block for half of what you paid for yours?

STARBUCKS COFFEE

Okay, that was less than sunny. It’s hard to whistle for joy when you discover that your money pit is worth less than the mounds of cash you’ve fork-lifted into it.

At least there’s the solace of schadenfreude. For instance, as a deadline prospector who spent years tin-panning rivers of ink for microscopic specks of specie, I was never above begrudging wet-nosed whippersnappers who, freshly hatched from their law-school pods, earned a pasha’s purse simply for parsing black-letter law. That these twentysomething twits must now Twitter to each other over the injustice of their still-extravagant wages does put a spring in my step.

Now, this all may seem like cold comfort as you careen through one sphincter-tightening roller-coaster portfolio plunge after another. But just remember: Cheer up, for the worst is yet to come.

—JONAH GOLDBERG

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evidence that any child had ever been harmed thereby. Last summer, following the panic over lead paint on toys from China, Congress passed the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA). Books came within the scope of the act, though the evidence of harm from books is no better now than it was in 1985. When CPSIA duly took effect on February 10, used-book dealers, thrift stores, and libraries nationwide began shipping the entire glorious heritage of early-20th-century children's book illustration to garbage dumps, terrified of the fines (up to $250,000) and prison time (up to five years) specified by the act for selling or distributing pre-1985 volumes. That treasured copy of *Little Women* that belonged to your grandmother, with those lovely colored illustrations, is now contraband. Perhaps our zealous new administration will establish a federal corps of "firemen," like the one in Ray Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451*, to hunt down these poisonous books and burn them—for the sake of the children, you know. Beware, beware, beware of a Congress passing ill-considered laws in panic.

■ As we go to press, jurors in Arizona are considering a complaint against Roger Barnett, an Arizona rancher. Sixteen Mexicans seek $32 million in damages from Barnett, whose ranch was under siege from illegals who cut through his fences, slaughtered his livestock, destroyed expensive water pumps, stole his cars, and broke into his home. Barnett has, over the years, turned 12,000 (!) illegals in to the authorities. During the episode in question, he was armed, and prudently: One of the men he apprehended was a convicted drug smuggler, already once deported. The Mexicans say Barnett violated their civil rights and caused them distress. This is the sort of distress that should be encouraged.

■ President Obama, hailed as a verbal master, uses "enormity" a lot. And he uses it incorrectly. He thinks it means something very, very big, instead of something very, very bad. (Some modern dictionaries nod to the incorrect usage, out of weariness, no doubt.) The stimulus package is enormous, all right. For the sake of America's economy, and the world's: Let's hope it does not prove an enormity.

■ Abdul Qadeer Khan is a real-life Dr. Strangelove whose career casts a menacing shadow over the future. Thanks to him, his native country of Pakistan has the nuclear bomb. To his countrymen, he is the hero who allows them to wipe India out even as India wipes them out. As if that were not destabilizing enough, Khan sold the bomb technology to Iran, North Korea, and Libya. When this proliferation became public knowledge, the Pakistani government of President Musharraf placed Khan under house arrest, hardly more than a token punishment. After five years of an increasingly unsupervised sentence, the high court in Islamabad has freed him to do as he pleases. No checks seem to have been placed on his traveling, or on the surreptitious sale of nuclear technology abroad. Talking to reporters, Khan in Muslim style thanked Allah for his release and praised the present government of Asif Zardari as well. As for the international reaction, he said, "I don't damn care." According to the Pakistani foreign ministry, "the so-called A. Q. Khan affair is a closed chapter." Altogether they couldn't make it plainer that they consider President Obama a pushover.

■ Geert Wilders, Dutch politician, was invited to Britain to screen *Fitna*, his film blaming jihadist violence on the Koran. But the government refused him a visa, held him when he tried to land at Heathrow, and sent him home. The Home Office explained that the British government "opposes extremism in all its forms" and "will stop those who want to spread" it "from coming to our country." But this is not true. Radical Islamic clerics immigrate, accept British welfare payments, and spew hatred to their ovine congregations. Wilders was kept out because radical British Muslims threatened to take to the streets, and Gordon Brown's Labour government, facing a dicey election, did not want to rile them. *Fitna* pulls no punches; welcome to the 21st century (and to the 18th). Not that the opposition Tories made any defense of free speech. A cosseted minority and a political class void of intellectual principle and national self-respect are tugging Britain across a cultural divide. Britain stood with us nobly in Afghanistan and Iraq. In the next flare-up of the Terror War, will it be less anti-jihadist than Iraq?

■ The trouble with the Israeli election is that Tzipi Livni of the center-left Kadima party and Bibi Netanyahu of center-right Likud won it more or less equally. Neither of them has anything like the numbers necessary for government, so the end result will be a coalition of some sort. Israel is basically a leftist country, and Livni might be able to appeal to the abiding wish to reach some kind of peace with the Palestinians. However, the electorate has been disenchanted that the campaigns against Hezbollah and Hamas ended without the clear-cut defeat of terror, and it has swung right. Other parties with smaller numbers represent various special interests, whether nationalist, religious, or social, and the experts are busy calculating who among them is prepared to go back on promises and principles for the sake of office. It is none too pretty. Whatever the assorted party leaders say in public should be taken with spoonfuls of salt. For some time to come, none of them will reveal their inner hopes or the price they are prepared to pay for them—except in private, and then only in face-to-face bargaining sessions. Some hot money is going on Kadima and Likud's coming together in a coalition of national unity. And as in the theater, lo and behold, the curtain will soon rise to reveal the government that this cast of characters has finally managed to scrabble together.

■ The world makes too little of the oppression of Palestinians—by other Palestinians. So Amnesty International is to be applauded for its recent report on Gaza. The nub of it is, "Hamas forces and militias in the Gaza Strip have engaged in a campaign of abductions, deliberate and unlawful killings, torture and death threats against those they accuse of 'collaborating' with Israel, as well as opponents and critics." The details are characteristically disgusting, and Hamas has been doing this for years. (So has the PLO, but that is another story. No, actually the same one, pretty much.) At least a big human-rights group has taken notice. People who claim to care about Palestinians but speak only of Israel are pretending.

■ The tactic of accusing Israel of war crimes whenever it takes steps to defend itself should by now have been worked too often to be effective any longer. But no: The recent campaign in Gaza produced a memorable specimen of the false accusation against Israel, courtesy of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. The agency was set up 60 years ago to care for Palestinian refugees, but instead has served to perpetuate their plight. This time, UNRWA was claiming that Israeli shelling in northern Gaza had hit a school under its auspices, killing 43 civilians and wounding more among the 1,300 taking shelter there. UNRWA officials and then–U.N. secretary general Ban Ki-moon spouted rage and retribution. Investigating, the Toronto *Globe and Mail* was the first among other media outlets to discover that in fact the school had not been hit at all, that the casualties had occurred outside in nearby streets, and that a good few of them were Hamas terrorists. Backpedaling, the UNRWA officials announced that a clerical error had led to the false accusation. That's really bizarre, but perfectly in keeping with an agency that has long outlived any useful purpose it might have had.

■ The depravity of Islamofascism, the depravity of the jihad, knows no bounds. The latest illustration of this comes from Iraq, where lives a woman named Samira Jassim. She is known as "Um al-Mumenin," or the "Mother of the Believers." She organized the rape of more than 80 women: so as to force them into suicide bombing. First, they would be raped. Then they would be told that there was no escape from the "shame" of this except "martyrdom": a self-detonation that murdered others. As President Bush continually said, if this is not evil, then there is no evil. And civilized people have no choice except to keep fighting it.

■ Venezuelan strongman Hugo Chávez won a referendum, giving him the possibility of remaining in power forever. The voters abolished term limits. Chávez jubilantly declared that he would speed up "the construction of true socialism." (Would that be the socialism of North Korea? Nazi Germany? Castro's Cuba? Hoxha's Albania?) And Chávez was at his revealing best before the referendum. First, he said that Lech Walesa would not be welcome in Venezuela. Why would he? He is a trade unionist who stands for the opposite of Chávezism—specifically, liberal democracy. Chávez also abolished Valentine's Day. Or rather, he postponed it. V-Day fell on the Saturday before the Sunday referendum, and Chávez imposed a dry law starting on Friday afternoon: no partying before the vote. As he put it, "We're going to be in battle. After achieving our great victory, the week of love begins." Yes, "I'm giving you a week in exchange for a day. That's not bad, is it?" This is comical stuff, of course. But a strongman who can postpone Valentine's Day—can do a lot more.

■ Charles de Gaulle regarded NATO with deep suspicion as a conspiracy by *les Anglo-Saxons* to dominate Europe. In 1966 he removed French troops from NATO command and expelled non-French troops from France. Well, times have changed. Current French president Nicolas Sarkozy is keen to improve his country's security ties with the U.S. An announcement that France will fully rejoin NATO is widely expected this spring. Gaullist sentiment is still strong in France, though, and Sarkozy must appease it by playing up Europe's independent defense capability, such as it is. That would be Eurocorps, the ad hoc six-nation unit created in 1992 by François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl. As part of the playing-up of Eurocorps, a battalion of German soldiers will now be based in France, the first since World War II. The announcement has occasioned much tasteless humor. Will *les Boches* have

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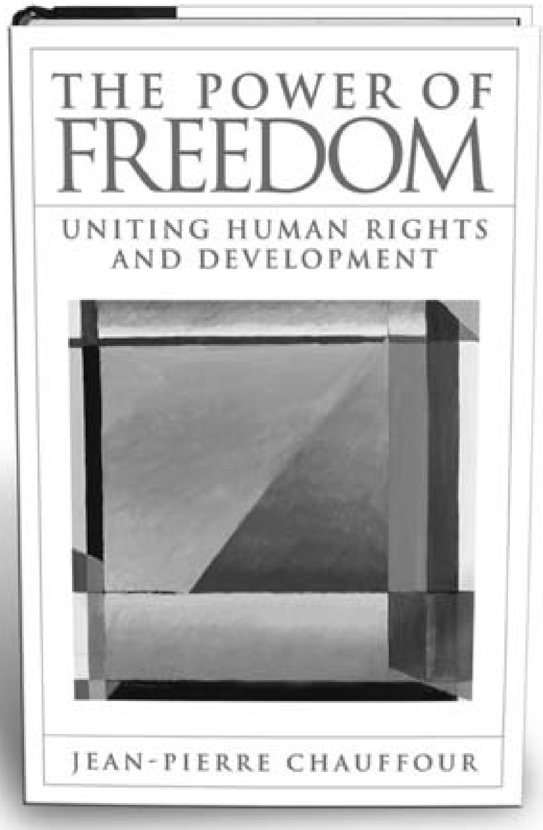

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to detour round the Maginot Line to reach their new garrison? Was the agreement signed in a railroad carriage? Will there be a parade along the Champs-Elysées? Etc., etc.

■ Prince Harry's sins against multicultural orthodoxy just go on multiplying. The 24-year-old second son of the heir to the British throne is currently a lieutenant in the British army, having graduated from Sandhurst Military Academy in 2006. He has recently been in hot water, since being seen, on an old video, calling fellow Sandhurst cadets "Paki" and "raghead." (The former colleague was from Pakistan, the latter had camouflage netting on his helmet.) Now, in a new outrage to our sensibilities, black comedian Stephen Amos has told the world that the prince said, on first meeting him, "You don't sound like a black chap." The prince's commanders, having been revived with smelling salts, ordered him to attend an "equality and diversity" course—his second, as British military training routinely includes such a course. This second course, we are assured, will be "more intensive" than the first. Perhaps the prince will be waterboarded until he screams out his eagerness to celebrate diversity.

■ Fire has been a recurring part of Australia's natural history for millions of years. The Aborigines understood this and preemptively burned off vegetation around villages to protect themselves. White settlers learned to take similar precautions in Australia's desert climate, but recently green activists in many areas have mandated the planting of trees and banned their removal, or even the clearing of brush. These restrictions made the horrific wildfire in Victoria even worse and, by hastening the already rapid spread of the flames, denied scores of residents a chance to escape. Nobody blames greens for starting the fire, which by one estimate put as much carbon into the atmosphere as all of Australia's industry does in a year; it was arson, possibly related to terrorism. But the added deaths and damage caused by reflexive tree-hugging show the harm that can result when sentiment replaces science.

■ An important blow for public health was struck on February 12 when a special federal court ruled there was no evidence of a link between the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine and autism in children. A few days before the decision was announced, the London *Sunday Times* reported that the doctor responsible for spreading the MMR scare, who was already under investigation for assorted misconduct, had falsified the data in his original paper. In view of the terrible toll that autism takes, it's hard to blame parents who search for answers, but even though all responsible scientific authorities agree that the purported connection with MMR is illusory, measles cases have rebounded alarmingly from near-zero levels in areas where the allegation has taken hold. For the sake of everyone's health, the judges' endorsement of MMR's safety should be spread just as widely as were the false reports of its supposed dangers.

NEWSCOM

■ Here is an abortion story: In the Miami area, a woman named Sycloria Williams went to get an abortion. She was 23 weeks pregnant, and she paid $1,200. As she sat in the chair, waiting for her abortion, an accident happened: She gave birth to a girl. The doctor had not yet arrived. And here we will quote the Associated Press: "What Williams and the [Florida] Health Department say happened next has shocked people on both sides of the abortion debate: One of the clinic's owners, who has no medical license, cut the infant's umbilical cord. Williams says the woman placed the baby in a plastic biohazard bag and threw it out. Police recovered the decomposing remains in a cardboard box a week later after getting anonymous tips." And Williams is suing the late-arriving doctor. Her attorney said, "I don't care what your politics are, what your morals are, this should not be happening in our community." What's the attorney's problem, and what's Williams's? She went for an abortion, and the doctor was a little slow-moving. She wanted the baby gone, and the baby was, indeed, gone. The AP has said that "both sides of the abortion debate" are "shocked." Why? Do five minutes make all that much difference—or 20, or 80? The gruesome cases make us think harder. And, in truth, all the cases are gruesome—some are just less seen than others.

■ Muzzammil Hassan is a businessman in the Buffalo area. He founded a TV network designed in part to portray Muslims in a positive light. Recently his wife, Aasiya Zubair Hassan, filed for divorce from him. She is no longer: Her husband beheaded her. At least that seems to be the case, and that is the charge. Here is a little lesson: If you seek to portray Muslims and their practices in a positive light, don't behead your wife, or anyone else. And it would be nice if, in the worldwide struggle against Islamofascism, the world had a little liberal and feminist help.

■ The bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln should not obscure that of Charles Darwin. The English naturalist offered to explain the origin, multiplicity, and development of species, but his work was immediately put to other uses. Evolution appeared to explode one of the traditional demonstrations of the existence of God, the argument from design: no plan, no Planner. Among those who tried to fill the alleged void were George Bernard Shaw, and others a great deal worse, who hoped to hasten the evolution of superior species of men (and the extinction of inferior ones). But religion and philosophy rose to the challenge. Darwin's coeval reasserted that all men are created equal, and that God judges them. The truth shall set you free, and that includes the truths of science, which it can never be wrong to know. Love, wisdom, and action must then do their part—as they did in the beginning, do now, and ever shall do.

■ National Review readers, along with our writers and editors, all (we are pretty sure) belong to the species *Homo sapiens*. A very closely related species, with whom our remote ancestors shared territory for many thousands of years, was *Homo neanderthalensis*, the Neanderthals. It would be fascinating to know more about this cousin species. Alas, the last known member perished some 30,000 years ago. Now researchers in Germany have announced a complete analysis of the Neanderthal genome—the full DNA carried in the nucleus of every one of an organism's cells. Bone fragments from a cave in Croatia yielded most of the DNA, but the researchers had to overcome formidable problems of microbial and human contamination. Now of course *Jurassic Park* fans are speculating about the generation of an actual living *H. neanderthalensis*. Should moral qualms about offenses against human dignity extend to not-quite-humans? Surely they should . . . though if an adult Neanderthal *is* eventually raised, it ought to be possible to find a seat in Congress for him.

■ The saga of Nadya Suleman, better—much better—known as Octomom, continues to enthrall and appall. Motherhood remains a good thing, even in a culture of abortion and broken homes, and the primitive awe that attended multiple births—Rome was founded by twins—lingers as well. But the production of Miss Suleman's octuplets by in vitro fertilization, on top of her six previous children, all IVF births, smacks of science fiction. Her determination to bear and raise all 14 children without a father is both feckless and willful, and her retention of two publicists—the first quit—suggests hucksterism. Her current flack, Wes Yoder, has also represented Rick Warren, the evangelical megapastor. Maybe the Reverend Warren can counsel Nadya—and Elijah, Amerah, Joshua Jacob, Aidan, Caleb, Calyissa, Jonah, Noah, Maliyah, McCai, Isaiah, Nariyah, Jeremiah, and Josiah.

■ The old-fashioned virtues are still alive in Omaha, Neb., where a man named Anthony Burres accidentally dropped his wallet and then sped off on his motorcycle as $100 bills began flying away in the breeze. A bystander took off to chase down Burres, while others at the site—near Boys Town, coincidentally—began gathering up the C-notes. When Burres returned, they gave him back his wallet and all but one of the 25 fugitive Benjamins. We commend the residents of Omaha for their unswerving honesty, and in these days of illusory "stimulus packages" we can only wish that all Americans were so scrupulous about accepting dubious cash windfalls.

■ This magazine has often expressed ambivalence about the government's war on drugs, but private-sector prohibition is another issue. Major League Baseball—a business highly dependent on public goodwill that prizes continuity with the past—is entirely right to ban performance enhancers and enforce that ban rigorously. The revelation that Alex Rodriguez, the likely future home-run king, used steroids (only between 2001 and 2003, he says) can hardly be called surprising after so many others have tested positive, but it is distressing nonetheless to fans who think that all of baseball's rules ought to be followed. Yet eventually the steroid problem will be gotten under control; students of the game will mentally adjust drug-enhanced statistics, the way they do with those from the dead-ball era or the 1960s pitchers' ascendancy; and, through it all, baseball will survive. As Adam Smith might have said, there's a deal of ruin in a national pastime.

■ The recession economy is playing havoc with some of our received wisdom. The maxim "Quit before they fire you," for example, is out of favor when jobs are hard to find. So believes 35-year-old Ravone Jones of Madison, Wis. Obviously disgruntled, or at any rate far from gruntled, with his job in a restaurant, Mr. Jones trashed the place, throwing food and utensils on the floor until apprehended by police. He told them he was trying to get fired because he couldn't collect unemployment if he simply quit. A pity we can't scale down the "golden parachute" concept to avoid such unpleasantness. Even more of a pity, perhaps, that we can't scale *up* the no-benefits-if-you-quit principle, to apply it to the heads of banks and investment houses.

■ Ready to snap fingers? Two, three: "They're creepy and they're kooky / Mysterious and spooky / They're altogether together ooky / The Addams Family." Pleasant to recall an old TV favorite; but that theme song brought a 20-week jail sentence down on a gent in Derbyshire, England. He had made a point of whistling it at a couple of elderly neighbors, apparently with malice aforethought, every time he encountered them. Whether he did the finger-snapping too is not recorded; but after four years of this, the neighbors' patience snapped. They called the police, claiming harassment. A court agreed, and it's off to the pokey for the spooky, kooky Derbyshire whistler. Our own Straggler swears he was completely uninvolved.

THE ECONOMY

Stimulus for Liberals

PERHAPS the central liberal criticism of George W. Bush is that he used a national crisis as an opportunity to pursue partisan aims. Liberals do not seem to see that, to an outsider, this is exactly what the stimulus bill looks like: an attempt to use the financial crisis to enact every liberal spending wish of the last two decades. (The difference is that Democrats had input in the Patriot Act and the authorization-of-force resolution.) The political scientist John Pitney has calculated that between the introduction of the bill and its passage, Congress spent money at a clip of a million dollars a second. The next time a liberal spending program is proposed, we will have to ask: How worthless must this program be if it could not make it into the stimulus?

Nor is the commitment of current and future taxpayer resources the worst of it. The stimulus bill partly undoes the most successful social reform of the last 30 years, not that Congress debated the matter. State governments will now be rewarded for expanding their welfare caseloads—rewarded even more than the previous unreformed version of welfare allowed. (Welfare reform has been *partly*, not wholly, undone: Recipients still lack the court-enforced entitlement to their benefits they had before 1996.)

The bill also includes funding for "comparative-effectiveness research" about health care. We have too little research on the

DARIN McGREGOR/AP

effectiveness of treatment regimes because we do not have a system of health-care financing that puts consumers in the driver's seat. Combined with the Obama administration's interest in a more government-centered health-care system, however, this research threatens to pave the way for federal rationing—unless industry groups succeed in making it pointless. Either way, it is a bad idea.

Federal policies have made the impact of this recession on state governments worse. By matching state Medicaid spending, the feds encourage states to expand benefits during booms and make it harder for them to save money during busts. This bill deals with the resulting state budget shortfalls by increasing the match rate—thus making the underlying problem worse.

Congress attached restrictions on the pay of executives of companies that have received government aid. The propriety of this move can reasonably be debated. But it is not a costless gesture: The Congressional Budget Office has estimated it will reduce federal tax revenues by $11 billion over ten years, by reducing the executives' income. Is it really worth raising the future tax burden to make up for this loss?

A little opprobrium ought to be directed at Senators Collins, Snowe, and Specter, the only Republicans in Congress to support this bill. Specter claims that he did so because something had to be done. Obama, for his part, has pretended that Republican opponents wanted to do nothing. In truth, superior alternatives have always been available. Regulatory changes could have strengthened the automotive and financial sectors of the economy. Reductions in the payroll tax could have given consumers more spending power, and encouraged job creation, without bureaucratic leeching.

Democrats preferred to rush through as permanent and large an expansion of the federal government as they could get. Republicans were right not to acquiesce to this politically and ideologically driven folly.

THE ECONOMY II

Bank Job

Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner announced his plan to save the banking system—or, rather, announced that he *has* a plan. Geithner hinted at new financial commitments on the order of $2 trillion, but he declined to describe his plan in any detail. What specifics he did provide failed to inspire any confidence in the man or his plan. Investors reacted by deserting bank stocks, and the market dropped by 300 points that day.

No doubt Geithner has a difficult task on his hands. There is no consensus, to say the least, among economists or policymakers on the proper government response to the banking crisis. Nevertheless, we have a pretty clear idea at this point of what doesn't work. Injecting capital into the banks—former Treasury secretary Henry Paulson's fallback when his plan to purchase troubled assets proved unworkable—turned out to be rife with unintended consequences. Banks' balance sheets continue to deteriorate as their CEOs are hauled before Congress to take marching orders from the likes of Barney Frank. Stock values have plunged as investors have abandoned these sinking ships.

Against this backdrop, Geithner proposed stress-testing banks and injecting *more* capital into "those institutions which need it." Does that mean directing more capital toward healthy banks? Propping up moribund banks? Either way, it means more banks working for two masters: their shareholders and Congress. Remind us: How did that work out for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac? Also, the government is the first in line for repayment, increasing the likelihood that shareholders would be totally wiped out in the event of a bankruptcy or federal takeover. Is it any wonder that the market reacted to this proposal with a huge sell-off?

Geithner's other pronouncements raised more questions than they answered. For instance, he proposed new spending on foreclosure-prevention programs that could total up to $100 billion. How would these efforts succeed where others, such as last summer's HOPE for Homeowners program, have failed? How would the administration deal with the stubborn reality that 30 to 40 percent of loan modifications end in foreclosure, regardless of the renegotiation? Geithner left these questions up in the air, giving the impression that this proposal was made at the last minute for political considerations.

Geithner called for a public-private partnership to buy toxic assets from troubled financial institutions. How would that work, exactly? Geithner said that the administration was "exploring a range of different structures," and that it would start by putting in $500 billion of public money and "expand it based on what works"—by how much, in addition to that first half a trillion dollars, Geithner didn't say. And why should private investors voluntarily deal with the government at this point, unless they have a strong desire to be lectured on subjects like executive pay and the use of private aircraft?

Finally, we come to the proposals we would have liked to hear from Geithner but didn't. We heard nothing about regulatory forbearance—the idea that temporarily relaxing mark-to-market accounting rules might be a prudent way to reduce the pressure on the banking system. This would allow banks to hold troubled assets to maturity (or until the market settles) without having to take crippling write-downs in the process. It's not an ideal solution, nor will it save every troubled bank. But the alternative seems to involve forcing taxpayers to purchase troubled assets at inflated prices. We'd rather make it easier for banks to keep these assets on their own balance sheets.

Even so, more financial institutions appear headed for insolvency. Some failed banks are beyond saving; indeed, an orderly liquidation of these firms is necessary to get the financial system working again. Above all, the government needs clear rules concerning the orderly dissolution of giant banks and non-depository financial institutions. During his confirmation hearings, Geithner pointed out the inadequacy of the government's ad hoc approach to such collapses and stressed the need for a contingency plan. His failure to deliver one explains much of the discontent over his dud of a speech.

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Away from the Gated Community

Republicans should not build a strategy around courting 'upscale' voters

BY RAMESH PONNURU & REIHAN SALAM

DEMOGRAPHY is destiny in politics, or so we have heard. In 2004, the growth of the exurbs was said to be generating a permanent Republican majority. Now the strong support for the Democrats by young people, Hispanics, and non-Christians is said to be creating an unstoppable trend toward liberalism.

The demographic trends are real. *National Journal* columnist Ronald Brownstein recently illustrated how much they matter with a neat exercise. He divided the electorate into six broad demographic groups—e.g., college-educated white voters and Hispanics—and noted how each had voted in the McCain–Obama contest. "If each of these groups voted as it did in 2008 but constituted the same share of the electorate as in 1992, McCain would have won. Comfortably."

Yet demography isn't everything. The shift from unified Republican control of the government in 2005 to unified Democratic control in 2009 was not produced only or even mainly by demographic trends. The make-up of the country did not change that quickly. A lot of people who had voted for Republicans started voting for Democrats.

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Those people are not easily categorizable. Republicans lost ground among Hispanics, whites, and blacks; among women and men; among voters with college degrees and voters without; among evangelicals and non-Christians; among libertarians and populists.

It is possible that Republicans will regain popularity, just as they have lost it, across the board—if, for example, continued economic trouble becomes associated with the Democrats. Certainly there is no point in trying to add tiny demographic groups to the Republican coalition: The party is too far down to get a majority that way.

Indeed, Republicans are so far out of power right now that they will probably have to do what they should always have been doing: figure out the main challenges to the national interest and how to meet them. But even the most well-considered agenda will fail to accomplish anything if it is impossible to imagine how a majority of the electorate could ever be moved to support it. And the truth is that Republicans are going to have to choose which voters they are most eager to court. Time and money are limited, after all, and the actions that tend to please one type of voter will displease another.

The distinguished political journalist Michael Barone recently wrote that one of the key choices facing Republicans is "whether to go after downscale or upscale voters." The former tend to be "cultural conservatives, and rural and small-town voters," and to love Alaska governor Sarah Palin. The latter tend to be socially liberal and, though Barone does not underscore the point, to disdain Palin. Barone's tentative conclusion is that "going upscale is the right move." He points out that young, high-income voters were more likely to support Obama than to support House Democrats, suggesting that Republicans can win them over.

We think that Barone's tentative judgment is incorrect: To the extent that Republicans have to choose among which group to find new voters, they should look first to "downscale" voters without college degrees. Instead of fretting about Greenwich, Conn., the party needs to focus on the increasingly racially diverse working-class neighborhoods of New Jersey, Minnesota, and Colorado.

Though the college-educated represent a large and growing share of the electorate—45 percent in 2008, over a third of whom have post-graduate degrees—the country still has a non-college-educated majority. Whereas John McCain won non-college-educated whites (39 percent of the electorate and shrinking) by 58 percent to 40 percent, he lost non-college-educated non-whites (16 percent of the electorate and growing) by an overwhelming 83 percent to 16 percent. Given the historic nature of Barack Obama's candidacy and the uneven impact of the economic downturn, this shouldn't be too surprising. Latinos, for example, are concentrated in hard-hit sectors and regions, and a disproportionately large number of non-white homeowners were impacted by the subprime-mortgage crisis. There is good reason to believe that Republican support among non-white voters has bottomed out. More to the point, it is crucially important that it has bottomed out.

McCain won college-educated whites (35 percent of the electorate and growing) by only 51 percent to 47 percent, and improving that number is certainly important

ROMAN GENN

for future Republican candidates. But it might actually prove more difficult and more risky than more aggressive outreach to "downscale" non-white cultural conservatives.

To understand why the young, upscale voters Barone mentioned may be hard for Republicans to reach, consider why Democrats have done so well with them in the first place. Many of them are clustered in dense, populous, high-cost communities, whether big cities or their inner suburbs. Government plays a more pervasive role here than it does elsewhere, and voters are socialized into believing that this is a good thing. (It helps that the state and local tax deduction insulates voters in these regions from the costs of governmental profligacy.) Elected officials, regardless of partisan affiliation, are expected to take an active role in managing the conflicts and trade-offs that inevitably emerge over traffic congestion, school funding, policing, and economic development.

One commonly held view is that "upscale" voters are voting against their economic interests out of distaste for Republican social views. This view ignores economic geography. The Center for an Urban Future, a centrist think tank, recently found that a middle-class lifestyle that costs $50,000 in Houston costs $72,772 in Boston and $123,322 in Manhattan. Many of the young, high-income voters who have flocked to the Democrats have done so because they feel financially strapped, and are eager to offload the burdens of acquiring health insurance and affordable housing onto the federal government.

The polling evidence suggests that these voters are as liberal on economic issues as they are on social issues. Among young voters overall, the Pew Research Center found that 69 percent favor an expanded role for government. And the more affluent voters are, the more likely they are to be ideologically consistent, i.e., liberal or conservative on social and economic issues. Shifting left on social issues would endanger the party's alliance with culturally conservative voters, a key part of Republican success over the last three decades, without sufficing to win over the upscale young.

An alternative strategy would largely maintain the Republican party's social conservatism while moving to the center on economic issues. That shift on economic issues need not take the form of supporting higher taxes. It would, rather, mean placing less emphasis on tax cuts for high earners and more on tax cuts for people in the middle of the income spectrum. It would mean working harder to get the public to associate Republicans with free-market policies to make health care more affordable and secure for the middle class.

The base of the Republican party is not averse to this type of shift. Midway through the 2008 election, pollsters Glen Bolger (a Republican) and Stanley Greenberg (a Democrat) conducted a survey for National Public Radio that included a "blind taste test" of party policies on a range of issues. The parties' positions and themes were presented both with and without party labels, and voters were asked to judge the position on the merits. And time and again, like Coke employees favoring Pepsi in a blind sample, Republican respondents preferred the Democratic position on domestic questions. On taxes, for example, the Democratic position called for rolling back the Bush tax cuts and focusing solely on middle-class tax relief. The Republican position called for renewing the Bush tax agenda, coupled with cuts in wasteful spending. When the Republican position was labeled as such, it was supported by 66 percent of Republicans. But when it was not labeled as the GOP position, it was supported by only 38 percent of Republicans—and a narrow majority of Republican voters actually preferred the Democratic line.

A shift to the center on economics would do more than bring the Republican party in line with the views and priorities of its base. It would also allow the party to fight more effectively for downscale voters who are culturally conservative but consider the GOP unresponsive to their economic concerns. Many of these voters are, of course, non-white. As the demographic composition of the country changes, the electoral value of Republican dominance among married white Christians is eroding. But adding married black and Latino and Asian cultural conservatives could revive the party. (There is, incidentally, absolutely no reason to think that young single people will keep voting Democratic in the same percentages as they become older married people.)

The downscale strategy would involve applying old conservative principles in creative new ways, while the upscale strategy would involve jettisoning a fair number of those principles altogether. The downscale strategy might even help Republicans both directly and indirectly with upscale voters. In a post-election analysis, Greenberg surveyed the relatively well-off suburbanites of Oakland County, Mich., who have been leaving the Republican party, and found that among their reasons for supporting Obama were his support for middle-class tax cuts and expanded health-insurance coverage. Would Republicans turn off these voters with an economic agenda geared toward the lower middle class? We know that a Democratic agenda thus targeted has not done so.

A Republican party that advanced downscale cultural conservatives' economic interests, meanwhile, would not need to lean so heavily on their cultural resentments to win their votes. Republicans' caricaturing of Democrats as effete and unpatriotic latte-sippers has reinforced the GOP's own reputation as anti-intellectual and philistine, and this reputation has harmed it in upscale precincts. An economic agenda more attractive to the country would reduce the party's reliance on cultural polarization.

Historical trends also favor the downscale strategy. The movement of affluent social liberals into the Democratic party and working-class social conservatives into the Republican party has been going on since at least 1964, when Rockefeller Republicans defected in large numbers to vote for LBJ. Going after lower-middle-class voters would build on the trend of 1966–2004 and require reversing only the trends of the last four years. The upscale strategy, on the other hand, would require reversing trends from 1964 through the present day. It's a taller order.

A downscale strategy would also serve the public interest. Many of the desires of affluent, socially liberal voters are worth attending to. Republicans should try, for example, to address their environmental concerns. But economic stagnation and family breakdown are taking a big toll on the lower middle class and the American dream. An economic and social agenda that helps lower-middle-class families get ahead—by, for example, encouraging marriage and reducing the cost of raising children—ought to be an urgent priority. It ought not be sacrificed for a misguided political strategy. **NR**

Lawyer's Lawyer, Radical's Radical

Meet Obama DOJ nominee Dawn Johnsen

BY ANDREW C. McCARTHY

Pregnancy provokes a welter of feelings, physical and emotional. But does anyone really think of pregnancy as slavery? Apparently so: Indiana University law professor Dawn Johnsen, Pres. Barack Obama's nominee to head the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel.

Yale-educated and ACLU-trained, Johnsen already has done one tour of duty at OLC. She spent nearly six years there during the Clinton administration (1993–98), the last two as acting chief. OLC, a critically important agency, is the administration's lawyers' lawyer. Staffed by graduates of top law schools who are then polished by elite judicial clerkships, it authoritatively interprets the law for the attorney general and, in doing so, drives administration legal policy. OLC's credibility is derived from its reputation for apolitical, academic discipline—its commitment to informing policymakers of what the law is, rather than what staffers believe the law should be. Johnsen is, for that reason, a poor fit: She is an ideologue, and an unabashed one.

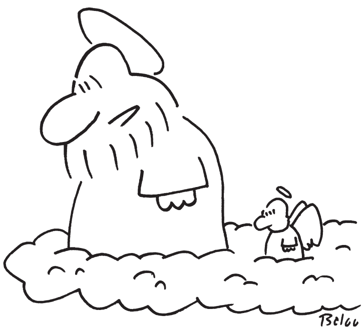
Her bizarre equation of pregnancy and slavery was not an off-the-cuff remark. It was her considered position in a 1989 brief filed in the Supreme Court. At the time, she was legal director of NARAL (then the National Abortion Rights Action League, since renamed NARAL Pro-Choice America). The case, *Webster* v. *Reproductive Health Services*, involved a Missouri law that did not ban abortion but restricted the use of state funds and resources for abortions. It's an obvious distinction, but one without a difference—at least according to Johnsen. Any restriction that makes abortion less accessible is, in her view, tantamount to "involuntary servitude" because it "requires a woman to provide continuous physical service to the fetus in order to further the state's asserted interest [in the life of the unborn]." In effect, a woman "is constantly aware for nine months that her body is not her own: the state has conscripted her body for its own ends." Such "forced pregnancy," she contends, violates the Thirteenth Amendment, which prohibits slavery.

The Court rejected this farcical theory, just as it has rejected other instantiations of Johnsen's extremism. On abortion and other issues dear to the Left, she is nothing short of a zealot. She insisted that, without government-provided abortion counseling, a large number of women would be left without "proper information about contraception." This, she claimed, would mean they "cannot be said to have a meaningful opportunity to avoid pregnancy." The usual rejoinder to such reasoning is that nobody is forcing these women to have sex. Johnsen sees it differently, writing that these "losers in the contraceptive lottery no more 'consent' to pregnancy than pedestrians 'consent' to being struck by drunk drivers."

In reputable private law offices and U.S. attorney's offices throughout the country, adult supervision would prevent such a lunatic analogy from finding its way into a letter to a lower-court judge, much less into a Supreme Court brief. Obama, however, is proposing that Johnsen be the adult supervision at Justice. He would fill a position calling for dispassionate rigor with a crusader for whom strident excess is habitual.

For Johnsen, no impediment to abortion-on-demand passes muster: She opposes 24-hour waiting periods, parental-consent requirements for minors, and laws against partial-birth abortion. In 2007, when it upheld the partial-birth ban in *Gonzales* v. *Carhart*, the Supreme Court clinically described the standard abortion procedure (i.e., the dismemberment and evacuation of the unborn child) to contrast it with the more barbaric partial-birth method. Johnsen's reaction—voiced while proposing "A Progressive Agenda for Women's Reproductive Health and Liberty" for the left-leaning American Constitution Society—was to complain that "every first-year law student's constitutional law casebook" now contains "gruesome descriptions designed to make abortions sound like infanticide." Moreover, as she declaimed in a 2006 op-ed opposing Samuel Alito's confirmation, opposition to all restrictions on abortion—not just acceptance of *Roe* v. *Wade*—should be a litmus test for judicial nominees. "The notion of legal restrictions as some kind of reasonable 'compromise'—perhaps to help make abortion 'safe, legal, and rare,'" she wrote, "proves nonsensical."

Johnsen's other *bête noire* is national security—at least to the extent it involves detaining terrorists and enemy combatants as military opponents rather trying them as civilian criminal defendants. Her 2008 academic article "What's a President to Do? Interpreting the Constitution in the Wake of Bush Administration Abuses" gathers the Left's full array of anti-war tropes and disguises them as legal analysis. There is the determination to ignore the terrorist attacks of the 1990s, such that the War on Terror is presented as something President Bush started after 9/11 rather than a years-long jihadist provocation to which the United States finally responded after 9/11. This framework would make it impossible to prosecute as war crimes such pre-9/11 atrocities as the bombings of the USS *Cole* and the embassies in East Africa. Johnsen further denigrates as an "extreme and implausible Commander-in-Chief theory" Bush's rationale for warrantless surveillance of suspected al-Qaeda communications into and out of the United States. In fact, the practice was strongly supported by federal court precedent and has since been reaffirmed by the appellate court Congress created specifically to consider such issues. And Johnsen has recently written that the new administration "should order an immediate review to determine which detainees should be released and which transferred to secure facilities in the United States" for civilian trials.



"I don't remember predetermining that!"

It is especially galling to consider Johnsen's smearing of John Yoo, the Cal-Berkeley law professor who, as a Bush OLC staffer, principally authored DOJ's so-called torture memo. In contrast to Johnsen's perversion of anti-slavery law to suit her abortion agenda, Yoo was not twisting the law to advocate torture. He was soberly attempting to construe a legal term, "severe . . . pain or suffering," part of the statutory definition of torture that had not yet been interpreted by the courts. This is what OLC does: It struggles to understand the state of the law, irrespective of staffers' predilections, so that policymakers can act in full awareness of their options. For this, Johnsen impugns not merely Yoo's scholarship ("irresponsibly and dangerously false") but also his good faith. She upbraids the Bush administration for its use of waterboarding to interrogate top al-Qaeda detainees, blithely presuming its illegality despite the complex questions surrounding that claim (including the fact that that Congress has declined to make waterboarding a war crime). Indifferent to the fact that our enemies train to resist known interrogation methods, Johnsen wants all tactics spelled out explicitly in advance.

Particularly rich is Johnsen's diatribe against Bush's purportedly outlandish claim of power to ignore statutes that encroach on executive authority. When Johnsen served in the Clinton administration (which invented extraordinary rendition, detained Cuban refugees without trial at Guantanamo Bay, conducted warrantless national-security searches, and attacked a foreign country without congressional authorization), OLC's official position was that "the President has enhanced responsibility to resist unconstitutional provisions that encroach upon the constitutional powers of the Presidency." The office opined that several statutes (including privacy provisions in the federal wiretap law) could not bind the president, and Johnsen herself authored a 1997 OLC opinion concluding that presidents were above consumer-credit-disclosure laws. In that case, she broadly asserted that "statutes that do not expressly apply to the President must be construed as not applying to him if such application would involve a possible conflict with his constitutional prerogatives."

A parallel hypocrisy is illustrated by Johnsen's rants about how the Bush administration "politicized" the Justice Department. Her solution to this problem: Politicize the Justice Department. She argues that job applicants who may have been passed over by the Bush administration for holding leftist political views should get "special consideration" in DOJ hiring but, at the same time, maintains that nominees for the federal judiciary should be rejected out of hand if they embrace constitutional originalism or are members of the judicially conservative Federalist Society. Johnsen would also press the DOJ to advance the leftist agenda by having its Environment and Natural Resource Division "pursue innovative litigation and policy initiatives, such as the pressing issue of climate change."

Johnsen's attraction for Obama is obvious. The principal target of her *Webster* brief was the settled principle that the Constitution's recognition of various fundamental rights (and the judicial invention of such "rights" as abortion) does not confer an entitlement to governmental aid to exercise those rights. For Johnsen, this is anathema, the denial of "economic justice" and thus of equal protection. "Economic justice," a favorite Obama phrase, is the Left's euphemism for the "redistributive change" Obama criticized the radical Warren Court for failing to embrace. Rather than the hoary construction of the Constitution as "a charter of negative liberties," one that says only what government "can't do to you," Obama urges a new bill of rights defining what government "must do on your behalf."

In Dawn Johnsen's dizzying jurisprudence, government has no business invading individual privacy and regulating abortion but is obliged to coerce taxpayers into underwriting abortions as a first step in what she unapologetically calls "the progressive agenda" of "universal health care, public funding for childcare, paid family leave, and . . . the full range of economic justice issues, from the minimum wage to taxation policy to financial support for struggling families."

If Johnsen is confirmed, OLC will be transformed from a source of non-ideological legal analysis to a culture-war agitator. And its value to the Department of Justice may be lost. **NR**

Lo, a Smart Grid!

The Left's energy miracle turns out not to be that

BY WILLIAM TUCKER

'We will build the roads and bridges, the electric grids and digital lines that feed our commerce and bind us together," President Obama promised in his inaugural address. "We will harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories."

He wasn't kidding. The stimulus package adopted last week included: $8 billion in loan guarantees for wind and solar projects, $4.5 billion for "smart grid" upgrades, $6.5 billion to help the Bonneville and Western Area Power Administrations upgrade their grid to ferry renewable energy from remote regions, and $600 million to help the Department of Defense convert facilities to wind and solar. We're on our way.

Modernizing our electric grid to accommodate a future built on "renewable" energy has become a favorite cause of environmentalists. Al Gore's "Repower America" plan says the key to creating a "green America" will be a "unified national smart grid" that will enable "clean electricity generated anywhere in America [to] power homes and businesses across the nation." In his current bestseller, *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*, Thomas Friedman longingly imagines that, 20 years from now, grid updates in California will have "made large-scale renewable energy practical for the first time ever. . . . Southern California Edison [will derive] more than half of its power from two vast renewable energy sources—wind and solar."

Environmentalists are right that there are problems with our current grid, and not just in terms of delivering wind and solar electricity. But they often misrepresent what it would take to solve the problems. They speak of the "smart grid" as if it were a panacea, but it will only install computers

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in every home to measure electricity use, the better to match supply with demand. Several additional technologies would be required to make large-scale wind and solar energy a reality, not to mention investments in the windmills and sunlight collectors themselves. Once all of these costs are taken into account, grid upgrades are much less attractive—and nuclear energy, coupled with some solar power, looks like a much more reasonable cure for the nation's energy ailments.

The first problem with the current grid is that it cannot balance the intermittent power supply from wind and solar energy with Americans' shifting electricity demands. A grid is not a machine for cranking out electricity, but a highly tuned instrument; because electricity travels at the speed of light, it must be consumed as it is generated. If electricity drops more than 5 percent, brownouts or blackouts may occur. If it surges by an equal amount, it can damage electrical equipment. (That's why you have a "surge protector" between the wall outlet and your computer.)

On the supply side, the wind doesn't blow all the time, and the sun doesn't shine all the time. On the demand side, people need different amounts of electricity depending on the time of day and the weather. This mismatch wreaks havoc on the system, and that's why Friedman's "half" figure is sheer fantasy: The best estimates are that the grid can tolerate no more than 20 percent wind without becoming overwhelmed by fluctuations. Solar, at best, could handle another 10 percent of our consumption.

The second problem stems from the fact that wind and solar facilities—because of their staggering land requirements—are best located in remote places. The upper Midwest is being billed the "Saudi Arabia of wind." Huge solar installations are planned for southwestern deserts. This means the grid has to ferry electricity over long distances to urban centers, which our current setup cannot do efficiently.

The computerized smart grid's main task will be to help match supply and demand. Meter readers will no longer come to your house—everything will be recorded at some central information station. This will enable utilities to tweak prices hour by hour, raising rates at times of high usage. The hope is that people will postpone chores such as washing dishes or drying clothes to off-peak hours, thereby leveling the daily fluctuations.

This will not *solve* the supply-and-demand problem, however: If the wind dies down, power disappears, and even the smartest grid can't transmit electricity that doesn't exist. To increase the proportion of electricity coming from wind and solar to anything like Friedman levels, a vast network of electrical storage will also be required.

At present there is only one established technology for storing commercial quantities of electricity, "pumped storage." At night, such a system uses extra electricity to pump water uphill. During the day, when demand is high, the water is released, and the power is re-collected via turbines. There are about 30 pumped-storage plants around the country, with a total capacity of approximately 20,000 MW—3 percent of our total consumption. All the good sites are gone, and there will be no more.

A second method is to use excess electricity to fill underground caverns with pressurized air, but this is not yet in wide use. There is also talk of employing a national fleet of electric cars as a network of storage batteries, but that is far in the future.

The second problem, that of transporting wind- and solar-generated electricity to population centers, requires a completely different solution. Our 345 kilovolt (kV) transmission lines cannot transport electricity more than 300 miles without excessive losses to heat and friction. The only way to reduce line loss is to upgrade to 765 kV. That means building an entirely new national grid—at a time when our current grid has fallen into disrepair because no one wants transmission lines built near his neighborhood. The cost will easily surpass $1 trillion.

That won't be the end of the matter, however—these updates will address the *distribution* of electricity, but not its *generation*. To supply more wind and solar energy, we'll need windmills and sunlight collectors on an almost unimaginable scale. In his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in January, Gore downplayed the cost this would impose, claiming that all of America's electricity needs could be provided by a southwestern solar facility "100 miles on each side" (10,000 square miles). To support this assertion, he referenced a January 2008 *Scientific American* article.

But the article, "A Solar Grand Plan," actually says "46,000 square miles of land would be needed for photovoltaic and concentrated solar power installations." That's one-third of New Mexico, the fifth-largest state. The article also calls for a national network of pressurized-air electricity storage. The solar collectors would easily cost $1 trillion, the storage system a second trillion, and the rebuilt transmission grid a third. A trillion here, a trillion there . . .

But despite its expense, is this course of action best over the long term? In 2008, the Electric Power Research Institute in Palo Alto, Calif., released an enthusiastic report, "The Green Grid," exploring every conceivable angle by which updates like these might save energy. One was that, with electricity use smoothed out, voltage in residential neighborhoods could be shaved from 120 V to 114 V, since household appliances would rarely require full power. Another was that computerized substations could constantly adjust voltage, reducing transmission and distribution losses. The study even factored in the gasoline that utilities would save if meter readers didn't have to visit every home.

Yet EPRI's best estimate was that, even with all possible improvements, electricity use by 2030 would be only 7 to 11 percent lower than it is currently projected to be. The drop is so small, the report noted, in part because *redistributing* electricity use from peak to off-peak hours is not the same as *reducing total* electricity use. Compared with the investment, the savings in lower electric costs would be trivial.

So here's a better suggestion. It comes from Larry Kazmerski, head of solar-photovoltaic research at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Golden, Colo. "We think the solution is a combination of solar and nuclear," he says. "Nuclear power can handle the base load. Then you can meet your peak demand with photovoltaics. That's solar's greatest advantage—it peaks exactly when it's needed, on hot summer afternoons."

The most remarkable aspect of this solution is that it wouldn't require a new grid. Without the need to import electricity from North Dakota or the Mojave Desert, the present system would work just fine. In fact, electricity generation could become very local indeed, because while renewables have been getting bigger, nuclear has been getting smaller: Hyperion Power Generation, Inc., a New Mexico company, just introduced a reactor the size of a gazebo that can power 20,000 average-size homes.

Who would have thought nuclear would be small and green? **NR**

Why We Hate Us

The business of making movies drives Hollywood nuts

BY DAVID KAHANE

YOU think you know Hollywood? Sure, you've seen your share of movies. You read *Vanity Fair* and *Entertainment Weekly* and sneak a peak at *Showbiz Tonight* from time to time to catch the latest on Lindsay Lohan's sexual orientation. You probably even have a million-dollar script inside you, howling to get out. Who knows, maybe you're even one of the tiny minority of Americans who have seen *Frost/Nixon*, *Milk*, or *The Reader*, three of this year's Best Picture nominees that combined have grossed less than $50 million so far.

In that case, you know that we show folks are a bunch of neurotic, granola-crunching, coke-snorting, Prius-driving, raw-foods-consuming, bed-hopping, real-estate-obsessed, anti-gun, pro-gay-marriage, metrosexual Obama voters who talk deals all day at Orso's and Sushi Roku and sleep each night in upscale, all-white enclaves with "Armed Response" signs in front of the houses.

You know we revel in making movies about how evil Amerikkka is, how disastrous the Iraq War was—just like Vietnam!—how dysfunctional the "typical" American family is, and how the American Dream is founded upon the ruthless conquest, pillage, and exploitation of Indigenous Peoples and the original African African-Americans. You're sure that Hollywood is a conspiracy of illiterate ids in pursuit of a superabundant lifestyle, Ivy League–educated sociopaths only a few generations removed from the glove salesmen and nickelodeon operators who first came west.

In other words, you know we're as liberal as liberals can be. And indeed we are. It's just not for the reasons you think, which means you really don't know anything about us at all.

As we begin the Obama Era, it behooves you to learn a little about us—because, whether you realize it or not, you elected us. With Rahm Emanuel gatekeeping at the White House and his *über*-agent brother, Ari Emanuel of Endeavor, battling CAA, ICM, and William Morris for control of Hollywood, it's the ethos of Tinseltown that will be rocking your world for at least the next four years.

Many explanations have been offered to account for our ludicrously parodistic version of liberalism. There is no cause too ridiculous for us to support, as long as it is described as a civil-rights issue and is couched in the language of "fairness," preferably tinged with self-loathing and anti-Americanism. Among the clichés cited for our conformism are (a) the arts are a natural home for sensitive and suffering souls, (b) like journalism, the movie business has long attracted crusaders for "social justice," and (c) the immense wealth generated for its creators by a hit movie—or, even better, a long-running television series—provokes an internal backlash of guilt over undeserved good fortune, which is then partially expiated by "good works," especially when those works involve spending taxpayers' money. (Taxes? Us? We have accountants for that.)

Forget about it. The origin of our reflexive liberalism lies not in the kinds of people who go into movie-making but in something far deeper: the nature of the movie business itself, which drives us insane.

I don't mean that the picture business necessarily attracts crazy people. Ruthless sociopaths, perhaps; snake-oil salesmen, surely; but not screaming-mimi, fall-down-frothing nut cases. That comes with experience. Nice small-town girls become sex symbols and die of drug overdoses or, failing to become sex symbols, throw themselves off the Hollywood sign. Major writers like Fitzgerald, Faulkner, and Chandler leave this town shambling, alcoholic wrecks. The late John Gregory Dunne (an underappreciated novelist, by the way) knew Hollywood as well as anybody, and he called his memoir of working on the film *Up Close and Personal* by Hollywood's rightful name: *Monster*. You can master the beast for a while, but in the end the Industry eats everybody.

Not that there's an actual "Industry" anymore, as there was in the days of the moguls and the studio system. What we have now in the wake of paternalistic Old Hollywood's collapse is probably the single greatest hive of unfettered, amoral capitalism in the country—a Hobbesian world of doubt, uncertainty, insecurity, rejection, and failure in which each man's hand is against every man, and every man's against his. Call us Ishmael.

Liberalism is a luxury item. Primitive peoples have no use for lawyers, agitators, and community organizers; when everyone is equally badly off, people seek out the hunters, the inventors, and the tough guys, not EPA administrators or associate professors of gender studies. When great cities start to fail—think New York during the Dinkins administration—people eventually call the cops, or Rudy

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"David Kahane" is the nom de plume of a writer in Hollywood. He writes regularly for NATIONAL REVIEW ONLINE.

Giuliani, until things get straightened out.

So you’d think that folks in Hollywood, once they’ve made it to Brentwood and Bel Air, would want to hold on to what they have. And in their personal lives they do: The west side of Los Angeles remains the most visibly conformist and segregated major city in America. Everybody looks the same, drives the same car, and lives in the same house, no matter its external architectural style. But the pleasant exteriors mask an inner dyspepsia, one we must confront daily as we go about the business of show business. No wonder we say there’s no business like it.

Here’s how it works:

As we members of the Writers Guild of America—the closed-shop union that screenwriters must join upon selling their first script to a Guild signatory company—like to say: *It all starts with the script*. A lone writer, or maybe partners, sitting in an airless room, spitballing, “what if”-ing, note-taking, typing. Creating worlds and characters out of nothing and then trying to animate them in 110 pages of pica typescript that, to the untrained eye, appears to be mostly strange abbreviations and white space. Until we write, nothing can happen. Which, in addition to the fact that we’re indispensable to feature films and scripted television, is the reason writers are so cordially loathed: We’re not only the lazy slobs who keep everybody else from working but the skunks who force agents and studio execs to lug home stacks of scripts with which to ruin their weekends. And if that seems contradictory, tough.

Then the real insanity begins.

Producers circle the material and occasionally bite, hoping they’ll be able to “attach elements”—directors and actors. Without an offer, meaning money on the table for the actors and directors, they’re almost always unsuccessful, which is why the producer, whose wheedling and flattery would put Uriah Heep to shame, is such a stock figure that Mel Brooks made a movie and a musical about him. On some level, even the best of them are Max Bialystock.

If you’re lucky, Tom Cruise and Steven Spielberg sign on and your spec script ends up in front of a financing entity—a studio or a major indie—that can afford to pay everybody his quote and actually make the movie. There may be such a thing as a fun shoot, but most of the time filming is the drudgery of 18-hour days, infinite repetition, and interminable waits between set-ups. Everybody’s always on edge, at each other’s throats, or in each other’s beds.

As this misery runs its course, there’s no one you can trust. Hollywood is the place where “‘Hello,’ he lied” isn’t funny. Nobody will ever tell you the truth about your script, about the attachments, about its chances of getting made, about its real fate at the box office—there’s no percentage in the truth and, besides, you can’t handle it—and so the only thing that counts, the only thing that’s real, is the check that clears.

In the end, the combination of no job security, extreme competition—there’s always a new generation of writers, directors, and actors willing to live in their cars on Victory Boulevard in the Valley as they plot to take your job—and a dizzying emphasis on novelty wears even the strongest soul down. When we hit it big, we feel sorry for the schmucks who actually have to work for a living. When we lose out for a job, we relate to the schnooks who get canned from the assembly line when the plant closes and moves to China. Fat years and lean, we are nothing if not empathetic.

Message: *We care.* We don’t want you to have to go through what we go through. We don’t want you to have to worry about your job security or think about money every waking hour of the day. So we intend to keep on screaming about excessive executive compensation, except ours; about corporate jets, except ours; and about raising the minimum wage, even though we take production not only out of L.A. but out of the U.S.A., to wherever it’s cheapest. Liberalism lets us feel a little better about our hypocrisy and helps us sleep at night.

In the meantime, we’ll keep on making movies about cops and spies and serial killers and vampires, with as many cool weapons as we can brandish and as much gory violence as you can stomach. We’ll coarsen society with as much filthy language as we can imagine and make you laugh when it comes out of the mouths of babes. We’ll abuse the very notion of the traditional family by norming and honoring alternative lifestyles. We’ll celebrate diversity even though we have almost none.

We don’t hate America. We hate ourselves. We just take it out on you. Liberally. **NR**

The Tacky Index

Hollywood writer + Los Angeles address + Filet-O-Fish = Danger!

BY ROB LONG

Every decent American, when he or she is standing at a cash register, having just handed over the Visa card to pay for the pile of groceries or whatever, says the same silent prayer:

Please let the card go through.

Or we open the little plastic folder that holds the restaurant bill—oh, look! the waiter has brought us a little booklet!—slip our card into the slot, flip the booklet closed with a snap, hand it back to the waiter, and as he takes it away we half-close our eyes and pray:

Please let the card go through.

It’s our national mantra. It doesn’t really matter if we know, for certain, that the card is fully operational and loaded with untapped credit; it doesn’t matter if we’re the clean-living pay-it-off-each-month type; it doesn’t matter if it’s an AmEx Platinum or a Centurion.

The lady takes the card and swipes it through the machine, and we stare, in tense silence, as the display on the thingy goes from “Connecting . . .” to “Transacting . . .” The waiter makes his way back to our table through the crowded restaurant and we scan his facial expression for clues: Does he look like he’s about to have an awkward conversation with us? Does he look suspicious or disapproving or ready to call the sheriff?

But when the display shows “Approved,” or the waiter plops down the check, ready for signature, it’s like a little victory. A minor triumph. A narrow escape.

It has nothing to do with creditworthiness or ability to pay—when you eat a meal or buy a thing and pay for it not with cash but with a promise, you’re a borrower, a mooch, what they call in Yiddish a *schnorrer*. You’re Wimpy from *Popeye*: I will gladly pay you at the end of this month’s billing cycle a defined minimum payment for a pair of pants at Banana Republic today.

And it’s a pretty good system. Credit

cards give what is called *unsecured* debt because it's not tied to your property, the way a mortgage is tied to your house. When a credit-card company loses money on a consumer, the losses are covered by the rest of us who pay the fees and the interest and the minimum payment each month, who wouldn't *dream* of walking away from our obligations, and who hand over our cards with almost-confidence, though we can be heard to murmur, despite our jobs and 401(k)s and bank statements: *Please let the card go through*.

If the credit-card issuers make it up in volume—get a load of people to carry your plastic and the Boy Scouts will cover for the Bad Kids, and then some—the subprime-mortgage underwriters rely on the same good citizenship.

The last thing a person wants to lose, a (former) banker in the subprime business explained to me, is his house. People will sell the family jewels, cut out meals, pull the kids out of private school—anything—to keep current on their mortgages. It may make no sense economically, but homeownership has a powerful emotional pull. The subprime business, with its higher fees and punitive interest rates, maps itself pretty closely to the credit-card business: Get a load of iffy credit risks to take out higher-fee mortgages, and the Gallants will outnumber the Goofuses.

Not a bad business. Until, you know, recently.

With the total collapse of the subprime-mortgage business, and the coming wave of credit-card defaults, the nation has a new mantra. At the same moment that the credit-card holder stares at the credit-card thingy, intoning silently, *Please let the card go through*, *please let the card go through*, the bank issuer is on the other side of the terminal with a prayer of its own:

Please, dude, be able to pay this bill.

Because despite all of the research and the data mining, all of the complicated financial modeling and forecasting, this current economic downturn is fantastically baffling to the financial institutions that one year ago passed out credit cards and mortgages like Thai-restaurant takeout menus. Mortgage foreclosures are supposed to come only after people claw and scrimp and fight like wildcats to keep their houses, but these days, people just mail the keys back to the bank and walk away.

At least the mortgage lenders get to keep the house. Unsecured-debt providers like credit-card issuers are left with nothing to do but place threatening phone calls, send out sternly worded letters, and, in the event the defaulter has anything worth taking, sue.

As the credit-card issuers try to limit their losses and trim the amount of available credit out there, it's become obvious to them that they really don't know that much about us. A credit-card application is barely one page long. The most crucial detail—the applicant's Social Security number—is useful in assessing his *past* creditworthiness, but the future, as the shareholders of Lehman Brothers, Bear Stearns, Bank of America, Merrill Lynch, Wachovia, Countrywide, Morgan Stanley, et al., have discovered, is a mysterious thing.

So what can the credit-card issuers do?

They can do what we always thought they were doing anyway, as we stared at the display on the thingy and hoped they'd approve of our groceries, or pants, or hamburger, or iPod nano and prayed for them to *please let the card go through.* They can judge us.

Recently, charge-card issuer American Express has been adjusting its data filters to a brand-new metric: *where* a customer is shopping. According to their (no doubt) flawless statistical models, a Platinum Card holder who suddenly develops a taste for downscale shopping—from Lora Piana to Wal-Mart, from the Four Seasons to the Econo Lodge—may be about to experience the four most terrifying words a credit issuer can hear: an inability to pay.

IAN MCKINNELL/GETTY

Customers are reporting sharp, unexpected drops in their credit limits—despite a spotless payment history, despite money in the bank—due to a few key factors: a sudden interest in *el cheapo* shopping, a home mortgage from a subprime lender, and a house located in a real-estate-bubble disaster area like Florida or California. If all of these apply to you, don't try to put the new flat-screen from Wal-Mart on your AmEx card. Alarms and sirens will go off in AmEx HQ. You will be identified as part of a newly discovered economic class: the pre-deadbeat.

The trouble is, as the economy slides lower and slower, haven't *all* of us taken a sudden interest in Target? Speaking as someone who lives in tony, up-up-upscale southern California, where we used to wear $400 sweaters and enjoy $50 salads, I know I have. And so have a lot of my tonier friends. In the past, after an expensive meal or a high-end shopping spree, of course we'd mumble our little *please let the card go through* prayer because, honestly, we knew we'd overspent. We knew we didn't need the chef's tasting menu or the designer shoes or the hotel-room upgrade. We did it because, well, Citibank said we could. See? It says "Approved." Right on the thingy.

Call it the Tacky Index—a new way to forecast the creditworthiness of a cardholder. Part snobbery, part caution, all ironic: Now that we've all finally discovered the joys of discount, downscale living, the credit-card companies are cracking down.

It's hard to imagine that at my new favorite restaurant—after I'm asked, "Do you want fries with that?" (to which I usually nod vigorously)—I'll have to wonder, as I hand over my Visa card, whether I'm going to trigger some complicated algorithm. Hollywood writer + Los Angeles address + Filet-O-Fish = Danger! It's just a matter of time, I guess, before I top out on the Tacky Index. On the positive side, it means no more point-of-purchase prayers. **NR**

THE S E CAPITOL
SA CALIFORNIA

Governor GIRLY-MAN

Arnold Schwarzenegger caves to the Democrats as his state drowns in red

BY STEVEN F. HAYWARD

California conservatives greeted Arnold Schwarzenegger's ascension to the governor's office in the famous "total recall" election of 2003 with wary optimism. If anyone could make "post-partisanship" work in ever-bluer California, it would be the charismatic film superhero, immediately dubbed "the Governator." Schwarzenegger offset his social liberalism and his dubious matrimonial connection to the Kennedy family with professions of admiration for Milton Friedman (he even proclaimed an official "Milton Friedman Day") and encomiums to the American dream of opportunity and individual initiative that rivaled the depth and power of Ronald Reagan's. In his prime-time speech to the Republican National Convention in New York in 2004, he went where no Republican has dared to go for the last generation: He offered enthusiastic praise for Richard Nixon. Newly arrived in the U.S. in 1968 as an aspiring bodybuilder, Schwarzenegger said, he found Nixon's views more compelling than Hubert Humphrey's "socialism" because Nixon "was talking about free enterprise, getting government off your back, lowering taxes, and strengthening the military. Listening to Nixon speak sounded more like a breath of fresh air." It was Nixon, never mistaken for a girly-man, who made him a Republican.

Mr. Hayward is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and a senior fellow at the Pacific Research Institute in San Francisco. A native Californian, he divides his time between Washington, D.C., and Cambria, Calif.

At the time I admired Arnold's moxie in embracing Nixon, whom most other Republicans have shoved down the same memory hole as Herbert Hoover. But perhaps we should have seen this as a portent of trouble ahead. After all, it was Nixon who proclaimed, "I am a Keynesian in economics" before slapping on wage and price controls and letting domestic social spending shoot up faster than it had under Lyndon Johnson. Like Nixon (and George W. Bush), in fiscal matters Arnold has governed more like a Keynesian than a Friedmanite;

RICH PEDRONCELLI/AP

in regulatory affairs, he governs more like a German socialist than an Austrian-school liberal. Above all, on the mean plane of political maneuvering, the Governator, to mix superhero metaphors, has been unable to overcome the kryptonite of the public-employee unions and other liberal interest groups. Today he is as much of an albatross for California Republicans as George W. Bush was on the national scene.

Now California is in the grip of its worst-ever fiscal emergency, facing a budget shortfall of more than $42 billion over the next 18 months. State workers have begun involuntary unpaid furloughs, and state offices are closing two days a month. The state controller has stopped issuing income-tax refunds and is about to issue warrants—basically IOUs—to state vendors in lieu of checks. Right before Presidents Day weekend, Arnold and the leaders of both parties in the legislature reached a compromise that would raise taxes by $14.3 billion, cut spending by $15.8 billion, and borrow money to fill the remaining $12 billion hole, which the stimulus package in Washington might backfill. The plan calls for a 2.5 percent income-tax surcharge, or 5 percent if the stimulus money isn't enough. The sales tax would go up by a full percentage point (to over 9 percent in some counties), and the gasoline tax by twelve cents a gallon. As if that weren't enough of a hit for motorists, the vehicle-registration fee would nearly double, bringing it close to the level that helped spawn the recall effort against Arnold's predecessor, Gray Davis. Like the stimulus in Washington, the complicated package was rushed to a vote with little time for lawmakers to read through it.

California's constitution requires a two-thirds vote of both houses of the legislature to pass a budget and any tax increases, so the plan needed a handful of Republican votes. Budget stalemates are a perennial feature of California government, and after a protracted round of kabuki theater there is always one final Republican who can be badgered or bribed into casting the deciding vote. Nearly all Republican legislators have signed the Americans for Tax Reform "no-tax pledge," but that's no guarantee; after the 2006 election, Arnold said he was against tax increases too. Republican assemblyman Ted Gaines of Roseville (a firm No vote) says that Arnold "is worried about his legacy, and wants to leave the state in decent shape. He's coming our way, but only after his first solution [which] is always to raise taxes."

To entice the necessary handful of Republicans, the budget deal includes a ballot initiative by which voters can impose a spending limit. Details are scarce at the moment, but it appears the limit will be based on an average of previous revenue levels rather than on the ability of the state's economy to pay, and in any case it won't restrain the many elements of the budget, such as education spending, that are on automatic pilot. Arnold threatened to lay off up to 20,000 state employees—about 7 percent of the government's total full-time workforce—if a budget deal wasn't reached, a prospect that might elicit from conservatives the sentiment best expressed by another Hollywood actor-turned-politician, Clint Eastwood: Go ahead, make my day. (Over 17,000 state employees are paid six-figure salaries, by the way.) Despite locking the entire legislature inside the capitol over Presidents Day weekend, Arnold was still one vote short at press time, though if past budget crises are any guide, eventually he will get enough Republican votes to pass a budget close to this outline.

CALIFORNIA'S current fiscal crisis has been a long time in the making and stems from two major factors. The first is the state's byzantine budget structure; the second is the changing composition of California's economy, to which the government's fiscal and regulatory structure is increasingly unsuited. Over the years, conservatives have won some significant victories through the initiative process, most notably Proposition 13 in 1978, which sharply limited property taxes and helped launch the national tax revolt. But the Left has won its own share of victories at the ballot box, especially Proposition 98 in 1988, which gutted a spending limit that had actually produced taxpayer rebates in 1987 and that essentially earmarks half the state budget for public schools, whether they need it or not and regardless of performance. The Left has also beaten back several conservative ballot initiatives that would have imposed meaningful spending limits and curbed the power of public-employee unions and trial lawyers.

The result is a political scene resembling the trench warfare of World War I: Both sides lie bleeding and exhausted from expending huge resources (California initiative campaigns now routinely cost tens of millions of dollars) with little ground gained. But modern government being what it is, this stalemate leaves liberal interests in a better position to expand government continuously. Nominal state spending has grown by $30 billion since Arnold was first elected; on a per capita, inflation-adjusted basis, that represents a 20 percent increase.

The continued growth in spending comes on top of a burst of new spending that began in 1999, when Gray Davis succeeded Republican governor Pete Wilson and ignored Wilson's warnings about the state's fiscal vulnerabilities. Similarly to Arnold, Wilson had come to office in 1991 facing a then-unimaginable $14 billion budget deficit that accompanied the recession of 1991–92. Wilson's finance team recognized that California's economy was changing rapidly because of the end of the Cold War and California's increasingly harsh regulatory climate, which was driving business out of state. The once-thriving manufacturing sector was rapidly declining, replaced by a service sector that generated less tax revenue. The aerospace industry, which had boomed with space technology during the Apollo program as well as with civilian and military aviation, had largely folded up and left the state by the early 1990s. The last Big Three automanufacturing plant, a GM truck facility in Van Nuys, closed in 1992, eliminating 2,700 jobs.

Governor Wilson swallowed hard in 1991, raising taxes by $7 billion and cutting spending by an equal amount. Above all, he began warning that California's spending structure was out of balance and would be chronically in the red unless something was done to reduce the cost of government. Liberals scoffed and said the state would be fine once the economy recovered. But even as the nation's economy recovered, California's budget continued to hemorrhage red ink, despite continued cuts: In the last three years of Wilson's first term, the state budget actually declined in nominal terms.

Then something happened that no one had expected, and that seemed to vindicate the liberal big spenders: the dotcom boom. Between the bull market and the instant Internet IPO billionaires of Silicon Valley, record revenues from the income and capital-gains taxes began pouring into Sacramento. Governor Wilson was able to cut taxes and accumulate a budget surplus by 1997. It was a strange revenue bonanza, though; the state's revenue-forecasting models no longer worked, as a growing share of income-tax revenues depended on the exercise of stock options and realized capital gains, both matters of individual discretion and market conditions. Wilson's finance director, Craig Brown, drew the proper conclusion and issued a stark warning: If the bull market ended, or if Silicon Valley went into a slump, California's budget would go immediately back into the red.

Incoming governor Gray Davis ignored Brown's warnings. For liberal interest groups frustrated by the relatively parsimonious preceding 16 years under two Republican governors, free-spending happy days were here again. Davis handed out huge wage and pension increases to public employees and large increases in funding for public schools and other favorite causes of the interest groups that had backed his campaign, and he signed expensive new mandates on California business. During Wilson's eight years, state spending had increased by only $18 billion. Davis increased spending by $20 billion in just his first two years. By his third year, the dotcom bubble had burst, and the state began its experiment with rolling blackouts, yet Davis still increased spending by another $4 billion, even as the budget careened deeply into the red. He concealed the exploding deficit during his 2002 reelection campaign, which he won in a fairly close race over Republican newcomer Bill Simon. When the full magnitude of the budget deficit, and the resulting tax hikes, were revealed after the election, Californians were outraged, and the recall effort took flight.

Enter Arnold, stage right, in the fall of 2003. Being wholly new to Sacramento, Arnold brought in a number of Wilson's best people, who had done a competent job of running the state in the 1990s, though not always to the satisfaction of conservatives. Still, the de facto Wilson restoration represented a huge improvement over Davis. Arnold effectively attacked the special-interest hammerlock on Sacramento and stared down Democrats and trial lawyers—calling them the "girly-men of Sacramento"—in winning a reform of the state's workers'-compensation system. His budget fix involved $15 billion in borrowed money and only $2.5 billion in spending cuts, which merely pushed the problem down the road and stored up the whirlwind of trouble that has hit with full force now. The balanced-budget requirement of the bond measures passed in 2004 was toothless and riddled with loopholes.

Still, patching the budget and cutting Gray Davis's hated car tax by two-thirds was enough to restore California's bond rating, put a fright into Democrats, and earn him an "A" grade on the Cato Institute's 2004 rankings of the fiscal performance of the 50 state governors. There were many missed opportunities,

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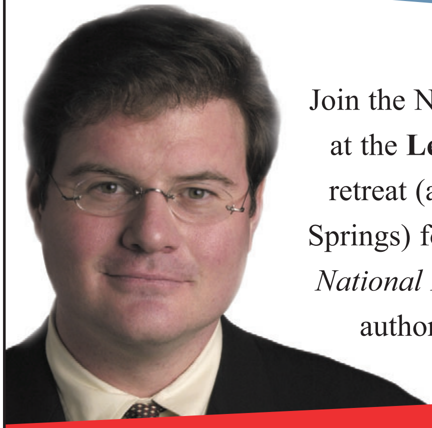

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though. He declared education spending (roughly half the state's general fund) to be untouchable, and he declined to take on necessary targets such as excessive regulation, choosing only to set up a "California Performance Review" to study and make recommendations for regulatory reform, from which there has been little follow-up. Instead of tackling these problems, he talked about creating California's "hydrogen economy," a chimera worthy of Jerry Brown.

As Arnold looked ahead toward reelection to a full term in 2006, there was reason to think he would step up his game. He had shown in his first year that he could raise substantial amounts of money and deploy his personal popularity in pursuit of political goals: In the 2004 election cycle he helped defeat a ballot initiative that would have weakened California's tough three-strikes criminal-sentencing law. But he miscalculated. Arnold decided to roll the dice by calling for a special election in 2005, which he called the Year of Reform, on an ambitious suite of ballot initiatives that included a spending limit, redistricting reform to eliminate partisan gerrymandering, tightening the tenure process for public-school teachers, and a "paycheck protection" measure to clip the political activity of labor unions.

With the state budget still in a deep fiscal hole, the Left skillfully turned the tables on Arnold, calling him a "spendthrift" and attacking the special election as an "irresponsible fiscal boondoggle" whose $50 million cost the state couldn't afford. Off-year special elections are always low-turnout affairs, tailor-made for union get-out-the-vote machines. All four initiatives lost badly. Union leaders were gleeful. "I'm very grateful to Arnold Schwarzenegger for really working people up," said Deborah Burger, president of the California Nurses Association. There was giddy talk of "terminating the Terminator" in the general election in 2006, but the Democrats nominated a weak candidate, state treasurer Phil Angelides. Arnold coasted to an easy reelection.

But a major change had taken place after the stinging defeat of 2005. In the words of Sacramento attorney Charles Bell, who had been on the inside of the machinations over the reform package, "Arnold went into a funk." Worse than a funk, he veered sharply left and seemingly threw in the towel to Democrats. His most head-scratching move was to appoint as his new chief of staff Susan Kennedy. Kennedy isn't just any Democrat; she has a far-left pedigree in California politics that began with Tom Hayden and Jane Fonda; she has also worked for Sen. Dianne Feinstein and as executive director of the California Democratic party. And before Arnold's election, Kennedy served as deputy chief of staff to none other than Gray Davis. She told *Marin* magazine last year that "I hated [Arnold] as much as any Democrat." She says she loves him now, but Assemblyman Gaines sees it differently: "Susan Kennedy destroyed Davis's governorship, and now she's destroying Arnold's."

Kennedy represents a virtual restoration of the Davis regime. Most of the Wilson-era staff are gone; most of Arnold's senior regulators, especially in the environmental agencies, come from the far left. "Arnold sheds advisers and staff like an actor sheds costumes between scenes," one former insider says. Arnold has signed on to the green agenda on global warming and alternative energy, even though California has among the highest energy prices in the nation and may face electricity shortages again in the near future. Adjusted for population growth and inflation, state spending has grown faster under Arnold than it did under Davis.

California has what economists call "exploitable amenity asymmetries," which in plain English means that people and businesses will pay a premium to live near the coast. But the costs have become too high, and the state's economic dynamism is clearly on the wane. Like Michigan after the waning of the Big Three automakers, California never really recovered from the recession of 2000–02. As recently as the 1980s, Joel Kotkin points out, median household income growth in California was above the national average; now it lags behind the national average.

Outmigration of skilled middle-class households is on the rise. The unemployment rate has zoomed to 9.3 percent, fourth-highest in the nation, up from 5.9 percent as recently as December 2007. The Tax Foundation ranks California 48th out of the 50 states for its business tax climate, ahead of only New Jersey and New York. Neighboring states are again running advertising campaigns to lure California companies to relocate where business costs are lower. No one expects another dot-com boom, or an alternative-energy boom, out of Silicon Valley. In fact, the Silicon Valley energy companies are lining up in Washington, D.C., demanding subsidies and stimulus money to keep them in business. On top of all this, a panel of federal judges, led by the Ninth Circuit's tireless busybody Stephen Reinhardt, has just ruled that California must soon begin releasing thousands of criminals from its overcrowded prisons. Meanwhile Arnold babbles on about hydrogen and hybrid cars.

The most popular explanation for Arnold's collapse is that he values his Hollywood popularity above his principles. Perhaps, but there is probably a more serious explanation. For all his professions of Friedmanite free-marketeering, if you listen closely, it appears that Arnold really doesn't have a clear or deep grasp of conservative principles. His first foray into California politics, a bond measure for after-school programs in 2002, was hardly something to set conservative hearts aflutter. During his 2003 recall campaign, he said he wanted to improve California's business climate in order to "bring businesses back to pay the taxes so that we can provide everything for the people." Upon assuming office in 2003, Arnold immediately began petitioning the Bush administration for stepped-up federal assistance rather than insisting that California live within its means. He has backed expensive bond measures for wasteful projects such as high-speed rail and a state-sponsored stem-cell research program. Conservatives were cheap dates and missed the subtle signals that Arnold lacked the fierce spirit of liberty that characterized Reagan's approach to governance. "He was never really a small-government guy," wrote *Sacramento Bee* columnist Daniel Weintraub. Or as one disillusioned former senior aide told me, "Arnold became Maria."

In the early days of Arnoldmania, back in 2003, there was loose talk of trying to amend the U.S. Constitution so the foreign-born Schwarzenegger could run for president. Now that he has fallen back to earth, the speculation is that Arnold might take on Sen. Barbara Boxer in 2010. But not even that prospect will suffice to revive any conservative enthusiasm for the Governator. For conservatives, he won't be back. **NR**

Magical MYSTERY Tour

David Cameron and the need for nastiness

BY JOHN O'SULLIVAN

In a *New York Times* column on the forthcoming struggle for the shrunken soul of the GOP between "reformers" and "traditionalists," David Brooks threw out the line that reformers "tend to be intrigued by the way David Cameron has modernized the British Conservative Party."

This instantly became conventional wisdom. That was partly because it fit the ideological needs of GOP "reformers" very conveniently. But it must also be said that the ground had been well prepared for it. Michael Gerson of the *Washington Post* op-ed page had visited London in March 2008 as the guest of (jointly) Tim Montgomerie's influential Tory website www.conservativehome.com and the Centre for Social Justice, headed by former Tory leader Iain Duncan Smith. Gerson returned critical of the Tories' weakness on foreign policy and "life" issues, but his overall response was enthusiastic: He had seen "the reincarnation of compassionate conservatism" in Tory social policy, praise be, and he duly cited Cameron and Smith as the very models of a moderate conservatism that the GOP might imitate.

In August, Fred Barnes of *The Weekly Standard* visited London, also as a guest of Montgomerie's website, and was given generous access to leading "Cameroons" such as shadow finance minister George Osborne and senior media guru Steve Hilton. Like Gerson, Barnes gave a balanced critique of the Cameron project: It was strong on social reform, timid on economics and foreign policy, and vague on much else. But he largely swallowed the Cameron "narrative" that underpins and justifies the project.

This narrative divides history into two periods: In the years BC (Before Cameron), the Tories had clung to a narrow and mean-minded traditionalism, repellent to hip, tolerant modern Britain, and campaigned solely on the "core issues" of Europe, immigration, and tax cuts. Accordingly they lost the watershed 1997 election to Blair's New Labour and went on to lose the next two elections as well. In the years AD (After Dave), however, they have embraced "diversity," social change, global warming, etc. Having thus "detoxified" or "decontaminated" the Tory brand image, they now look like winning the next election. Republicans, take note of this bold modernizing, etc., etc.

But is this conventional wisdom, well, true? Consider, first, its gloomy account of the period BC.

The narrative vastly exaggerates the Tory party's collapse from 1997 to 2006. Admittedly, the party was justly unpopular after the disastrous (but moderate and Europhiliac) Major administration. It needed time for the voters to forget. Many leading Tories, whose only prior experience in politics was of Thatcherite dominance, did not understand this elementary electoral truth. They went hysterical, wailing that they were out of power forever, speculating that conservatism was impossible in modern society.

In fact the bedrock Tory vote stood up pretty well. The Tories hovered around 32 percent in the elections of 1997, 2001, and 2005—which may sound terrible but is normal for the losing party in a two-and-a-half party system like Britain's. Labour won the last election with only 36 percent of the popular vote—just three points ahead of the Tories. When Labour had its own losing streak in the 1980s, its share of the vote fell to 27 percent. So a Tory recovery when Blair was gone and Major finally forgotten was always a likely outcome.

The narrative is solipsistic. It assumes that politics revolves around the Tory party. From 1997 to 2005, however, Britain was having a passionate love affair with Tony Blair. No one was interested in the Tories or whatever policies they managed to send forth from their coven. Only when the voters became disillusioned with Blair did the Tories get their chance. Fortunately for Cameron, that was where he came in.

The narrative subtly distorts what the Tory policy was throughout the period. The incautious reader might imagine that the Tories stuck to right-wing "traditionalist" policies after 1997. But certain standard phrases in the narrative, including "after a short flirtation with modernizing" and "they retreated to their comfort zone," give the game away. In reality, after each defeat the Tory leadership, far from banging on about taxes and immigration, adopted the modernizers' progressive but vague agenda of diversity, inclusiveness, etc. These ideological gestures, in addition to failing to win over targeted centrist voters, minimized bedrock Tory support. Facing imminent catastrophe at the polls, the Tory leaders then switched to more traditional policies—too late to win the election but just in time to save the modernizers from blame for the defeat.

The period BC ends with Cameron's election as Tory leader in December 2005. It also coincides roughly with the final fading of the spell Blair had cast on Middle Britain. When Blair finally resigned in June 2007, he was well past his "sell by" date, so it might seem odd that Cameron decided to position himself as "the heir to Blair"; actually, some thought had gone into this positioning. Three entire thoughts, in fact: The first was that the British voters still wanted a Blair-like figure—i.e., a soft-centrist social democrat—even if they had soured on Blair personally. Prime Minister Gordon Brown was plainly not that heir. He was seen, half-accurately, as a sour, puritanical, old-fashioned socialist who had been feuding with Blair since 1997. In broad theory, a Tory "heir to Blair" might have been able to entice moderate voters (and even a few Blairite ministers) from Brown into the Tory camp. They therefore decided to steal some of Blair's policies and most of his image.

The second thought was that prosperity was here to stay. If that was so, then Brown's high-spending, high-tax, and tight-regulation economic and fiscal policies were here to stay as well. Accordingly, the Tories could only damage themselves by proposing either tax cuts or spending controls. Labour ministers would ask the question: Which schools, hospitals, and roads will you axe, then? To which the Tories would have no good answer.

To avoid this embarrassment, they announced that, if elected, they would maintain the tax and spending policies of the despised Brown until 2011!

The third and last thought was that the Tories needed a cultural makeover. According to their own party chairman, Theresa May, they were seen as the "nasty party"—greedy, corrupt, mean-spirited; hostile to gays, immigrants, and Europe; and uncaring about the poor. One much-cited poll showed that when a policy with strong majority support, for instance immigration, was revealed to be a Tory policy, it immediately lost that support. "It's not our policies," wailed the Tory modernizers, "it's *us*." They meant, of course, "It's *them*," the Tory rank and file whom they despised and whose supposed reactionary opinions they blamed for their election defeats. But changing a party's base is even harder than changing its cultural image. Neither can be accomplished directly, as the crow flies. So the Cameroons decided to change the party by changing its policies—the very solution that the research had discredited and that perversely directed the Tories to shed popular policies tainted solely by association with them.

Each of these thoughts in isolation was highly questionable. Taken together, though, they pointed to a sort of agenda. Cameronism was an ad hoc reshaping of post-Thatcherite conservatism in order to appease its liberal critics in cultural institutions, the media establishment, and the metropolitan middle class. It involved adopting some New Labour policies, not challenging others, striking "green" attitudes on global warming, distancing the party from Lady Thatcher, confining tough-minded conservative policies to secondary and low-intensity issues, imposing silence on "hot button" conservative topics such as Europe and immigration, and so on. What all this did not involve was any positive new vision of conservatism. No general conservative outlook seemed to underpin it, and no distinctly conservative policies seemed to proceed naturally from it. Insofar as there was a theory holding it together, it was Theresa May's desire to move from "nastiness" to "niceness." But as Kenneth Minogue observes mordantly in a forthcoming edition of *Standpoint* magazine: "Niceness presents itself as benevolence, but is often merely an evasion of hard decisions that the realities of human nature require."

By the same token, nastiness is merely a hostile description of one of the Tory party's greatest strengths—its tough-minded willingness to deal seriously with real problems, even at the cost of seeming harsh. Even its enemies had respected this enduring element in Toryism. Now it was to be buried—and replaced by a strategy that was largely negative, otherwise directionless, and hostage to the passing sentimental moods of the voters.

Still, the new Toryism got off to a good start. Cameron, a natural politician gifted with charm, intelligence, force of will, and old-fashioned "toff" manners—a sort of Hugh Grant in *Three Elections and a Funeral*—threw himself into selling this mixture with zest. His ideological guru, Steve Hilton, arranged photo ops to dramatize the new approach. Cameron was seen cycling to work and sledging to the North Pole to show the Tory party's new commitment to environmental issues. His magical mystery tour was well and truly launched.

The first few years AD cover the period from December 2005 to Blair's departure in June 2007. This period is regarded as a success by the modernizers and their media claque because it allegedly "detoxified the brand." In fact, the Tories were still stuck in the mid-30s in the opinion polls in June 2007, lagging behind an increasingly unpopular Labour government. The "detox" was pure speculation, but the discontent of the Tory faithful was real. It had to be assuaged by quiet assurances that, after the detox stage, the Cameroon leadership would unveil real conservative policies. Or, as one Tory wag put it, "Trust us, we're lying."

The second AD stage, from June to October 2007, saw an ad campaign, "Not Flash, Just Gordon," launched by New Labour to greet its sober new leader. In a whirligig of calculated activity Brown recruited marginal Tories into his "big tent," praised "Britishness," invited Lady Thatcher to Downing Street for tea, and generally wrong-footed the Cameroons. By late September he was 11 points ahead in the opinion polls. He leaked the story that he might call an election. If he had done so, he would undoubtedly have won. But the threat of an election persuaded the unhappy Tories to rally to Cameron at their annual conference. Cameron himself changed course and offered them a popular cut in inheritance taxation. The conference was a success. The polls began to turn—and Brown turned tail. Worse, he denied he had ever intended calling an election at all, thus undermining one of his few assets—a reputation for personal honesty.

Nastiness is merely a hostile description of one of the Tory party's greatest strengths—its tough-minded willingness to deal seriously with real problems.

THE third period AD, from October 2007 to the onset of the financial crash one year later, is the most significant period of all. This was the first time since 1997 that the voters and the media were seriously interested in what the Tories might do in office. Coincidentally, it was also the period when Gerson, Barnes, and other American observers visited Britain to observe Project Cameron. As they reported, it was marked by vagueness and evasiveness on foreign policy but by a distinct move to the right on health, education, and other social matters. Cameron made Britain's "broken society" a major issue, and schools spokesman Michael Gove proposed what amounted to voucherless vouchers in education. This modest courage was rewarded with a steady Tory share in the high 40s in opinion polls through the summer of 2008. Even so, on the central issue of the economy Cameron and shadow finance minister Osborne continued their pledge to stick with Brown's budget and spending policies into late fall. At which point the financial roof fell in.

That should have pushed Brown into oblivion. The regulatory system he himself introduced in 1997 had presided over a financial crisis of epic proportions. Yet, jetting around the world to financial summits and producing "plans" out of thin air, Brown began to recover. His poll numbers rose to the mid-30s. If he had asked the voters in November for a mandate to solve the financial crisis, he might just have eked out a victory.

But his courage failed a second time. Insofar as anything can be predicted with confidence in politics, Brown has already lost the next election, maybe by a landslide. But has Cameron won it? After all the repositioning, detoxification, and photo ops, Tory poll ratings have now slipped back into the 40–44 percent range. If that were translated into votes, it would produce a Tory majority of about 70 seats in the next election. Opposition parties typically win fewer votes in general elections than in midterm polls or special elections. To win the next election on Tory merits, Cameron needs the steady high-40s share in polls he enjoyed last year. And recent polls show small gains at Labour's expense, not for the Tories but for third, fourth, and even fifth parties.

Even so, and barring miracles, Cameron will be the next prime minister—handed victory by the sheer scale of Brown's failure rather than as a result of confidence in the opposition. Why is there no enthusiasm for the Tories? Why have they actually lost their polling gains of last year? There are many possible answers, but the one that knits them all together is that the voters sense something not quite serious about the Cameron Tories. They share responsibility for the crisis because, like Labour, they assumed prosperity would continue forever. They went so far as to adopt Brown's budgetary policies essentially as an exercise in political positioning and conflict avoidance. Even where they differed from Labour, as on Europe and immigration, they cannot benefit from the failures of government policy because they decided to downplay controversial issues. They avoided deciding matters that divided them internally, in particular foreign policy, so that open rows are now breaking out between Cameron's senior colleagues over Iraq and Gaza. And across the spectrum they selected policies on the basis of their popularity with media liberals rather than because they would solve or ameliorate problems.

In short, they abandoned a broadly coherent post-Thatcherite conservatism without having any clear idea of what might replace it. They are today ideologically and psychologically directionless. They hesitate and wobble indecisively even on so clear an issue of principle as free speech in the Geert Wilders controversy. They need *something* to believe in—so they flounder after silly ideological novelties, as in their recent flirtation with an interventionist "Red Toryism."

All these things mattered much less last year. When prosperity looked permanent, the voters could risk a flutter on the Tories. But they are electoral weaknesses now that any new government will have to cope with a long and dangerous crisis. A healthy touch of pragmatic "nastiness" is required today to restore the British people's confidence in the Tories. Cameron is no doubt capable of this personally, but he has forsworn it ideologically. He must reverse that if he is not to fail—not in the election campaign but, worse, in power.

And what should reform-minded Republicans conclude from the Cameron experiment? My own advice would be as follows: Don't waste time thinking of being a reformer. Instead, think long and hard about how to solve the problems facing America. If you are conservatives, then your reforms will be conservative ones. They may be wrong; they may fail. At least, however, you won't face the Tories' current nightmare of staring into the prospect of failure because you copied other people's mistakes. **NR**

THE DEMOCRATS' Senate Scrapper

Harry Reid in the new Washington

BY JAY NORDLINGER

On the recent Inauguration Day, Washington became solidly Democratic. And there are three kings in this new Washington. The kingiest of all, of course, is President Obama. Then there is the famous, notorious Nancy Pelosi, speaker of the House. (She is more of a queen than a king, to be sure.) And then you have Harry Reid, the majority leader of the Senate. He is maybe less starry than the other two monarchs. But he is a Democratic and governmental big, now more than ever.

In the last Congress, he had a very slim majority. These days, he has quite a cushion (no matter the result of the Minnesota election, which is pending). As the new Congress was sworn in, he said, "I'm so excited, so pleased, and so happy to have a real majority now."

Maybe the most charming thing he ever said was, "I know my limitations. I haven't gotten where I am by my good looks, my athletic ability, my great brain, my oratorical skills . . ." People have long remarked on his unprepossessing appearance. They say he is part accountant, part undertaker. You recall that, in November 2004, Reid took over as minority leader from Tom Daschle, who had been defeated in South Dakota. An article in the *New York Times* said, "It is hardly clear to his allies that Mr. Reid, with his round glasses, plain face and soft-spoken manner, is the man to replace Mr. Daschle as the loyal if lonely face of the Democratic opposition, soldiering on from news conferences to television studios." And Sen. Joe Biden said, "I can't picture Harry on the Sunday shows every Sunday. I don't think that's his strength. His real strength is inside baseball, knowing the Senate, knowing the procedures."

If I may interpret, what the future vice president was saying was: Leave the gabby pretty-boy stuff to me.

Reid may not be Periclean (though he is at least the equal of Biden), but it can be enjoyable to hear him talk. For example, here he is on the effort to make Yucca Mountain—in his home state of Nevada—the federal nuclear-waste repository (and remember that he staunchly opposes this effort): "It's dying on its own. It's just happening. You don't need just a sudden demise. It's breathing really hard. Just let it lay there a while and it'll be dead." At the same time, he can speak with a viciously partisan and extremist tongue. Of President Bush, whom he openly hates, he has said, "I think his efforts to destroy Social Security were very bad," and, "He's done his very best to destroy Medicare." Bush might have a different interpretation of his attempted reforms of those programs.

And if *New York Times* reporters thought Reid "soft-spoken" in 2004, they have to have changed their minds since.

You can expect Reid to be a proud legislative warrior for President Obama. In early February, he was talking about a group of moderate senators who balked at the stimulus package, and wanted to modify it. He said, "They cannot hold the president of the United States hostage." You did not hear him talk this way when Bush was president. In those days, he was a ferocious check-and-balancer.

Reid's is one of the great up-from-nothing stories in American politics. He was born in Searchlight, Nev. (and that is one of the great placenames in America). He does not mind calling attention to that fact: Call up his office and you get a recording that says, "Hello, this is Sen. Harry Reid of Searchlight, Nevada." Things were pretty tough for the young man in Searchlight. His father was an alcoholic miner; his mother took in laundry from a bordello. On at least one occasion, Harry and his brother had to keep their father from beating their mother. Eventually, the father committed suicide.

There was never much money in the house. Sears catalogues served as toilet paper. Harry hitchhiked a long way to school, and there he was taught history, and how to box, by a man named Mike O'Callaghan. O'Callaghan would become governor of Nevada; his protégé, Reid, would serve as lieutenant governor under him.

In light of Reid's hardscrabble background, it was especially interesting to read of a little scandal in 2006: Reid had used campaign donations to give Christmas bonuses to the doormen in his Washington building. And what building was that? The Ritz-Carlton. Moreover, only a Democratic leader, you might say, could get away with living at the Ritz. A Republican would be skewered as baldly plutocratic.

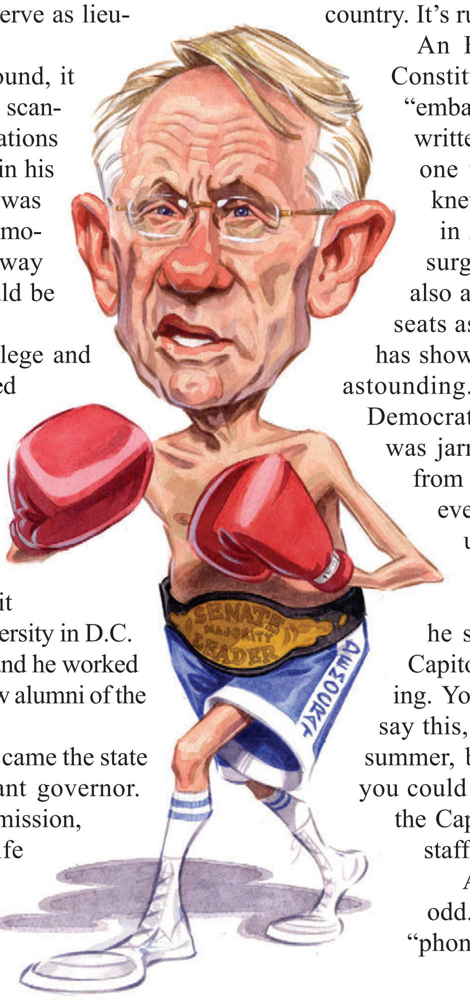
Reid attended Southern Utah State College and Utah State University. In this period, he joined the Mormon church. He once said to an interviewer, "I think it is much easier to be a good member of the church and a Democrat than a good member of the church and a Republican." Reid paints Republicans the way Dickens paints Oliver Twist's workhouse. After college, it was law school, at George Washington University in D.C. Reid did some more boxing in those years, and he worked for the Capitol Police. There must be very few alumni of the Capitol Police in Congress.

Back in Nevada, he rose in politics. First came the state assembly, and then that stint as lieutenant governor. Later, he was head of the "Gaming" Commission, and mobsters threatened his life: His wife found a bomb attached to their car. A character in the movie *Casino* is based in part on Reid. In 1982, he was elected to the U.S. House, and, four years later, he finally went to the Senate.

It's interesting to review news accounts of Reid, at the time his colleagues elected him minority leader. He was thought of as a moderate Mormon politician from the West (a long way from a Nancy Pelosi twin). Sen. Dianne Feinstein said, "I believe very strongly that the voice of the moderates of our caucus ought to have some sway. I have noticed in the past that all the gravitas has slid to the left. All one has to do is look at the map to know that you can't win a presidential election that way." And "if we keep going on this way, we'll be a minority party."

Mitch McConnell—the future Republican leader in the Senate—said, "I am a big fan of his," meaning Reid's. It is safe to assume that McConnell is a less big fan now. And the *New York Times* did something highly interesting: Noting that Reid was "close to Mr. Bush," it reported that the senator had nevertheless said "he would not let his closeness to the president affect the way he deals with him." Before long, Reid would call Bush a "liar" and a "loser." (He called him a loser in a discussion with high-school students!) And he would say, repeatedly, that Bush was the worst president in American history.

He delighted the leftmost reaches of the Democratic party all the way around—in the way he talked, in the way he voted, in the way he led. He became a darling of *Daily Kos* and MoveOn.org. Byron York documented this meticulously in a report for this magazine two years ago ("Wild about Harry"). I will give you a sample of the modern-day Reid: "Coal makes us sick. Oil makes us sick. It's global warming. It's ruining our country. It's ruining our world."

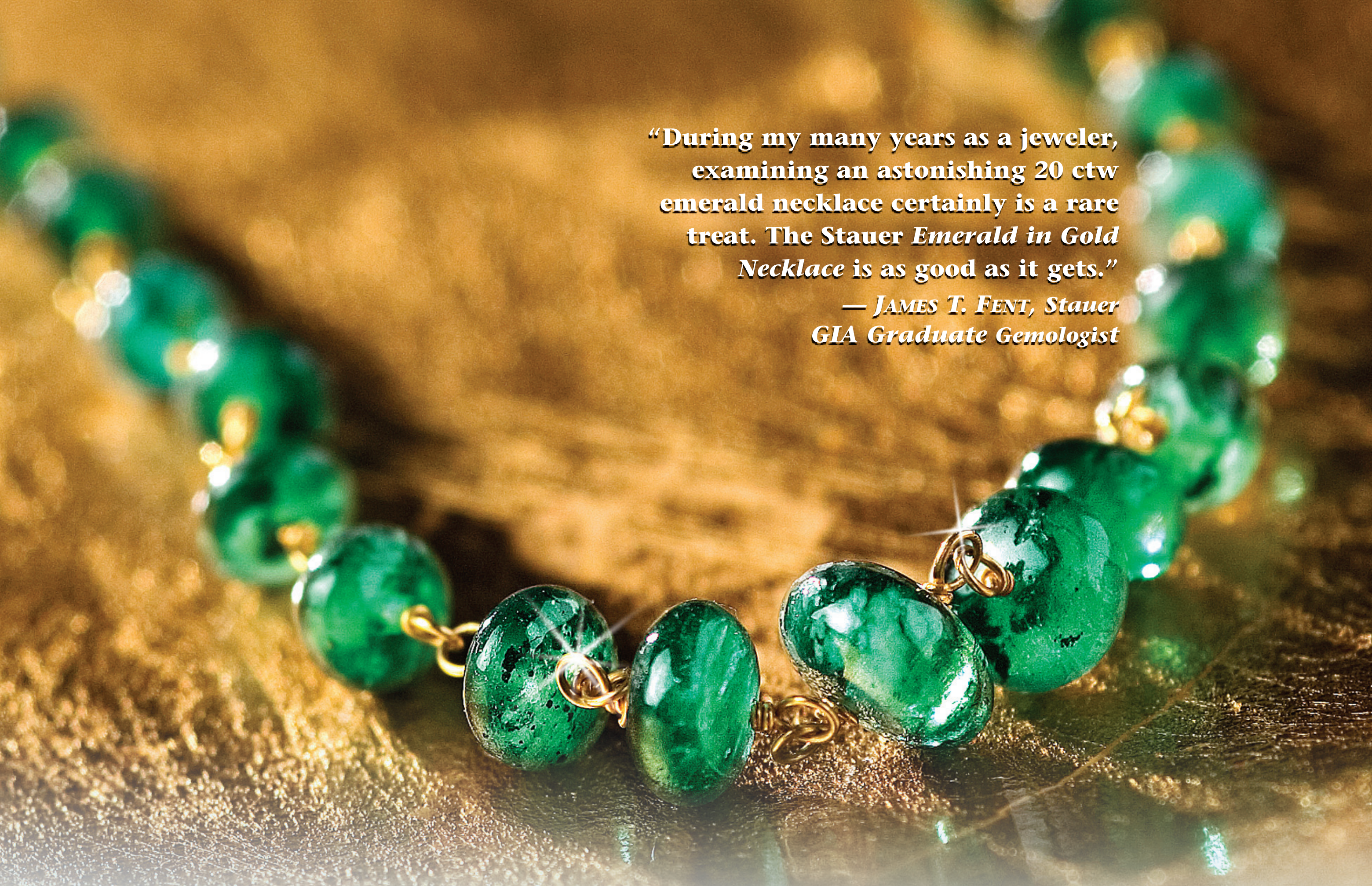


DARREN GYGI

An English-language amendment to the Constitution is "racist." Justice Thomas is an "embarrassment" whose opinions are "poorly written." (Who told Reid that? Certainly no one who had read Thomas's opinions—or knew about writing.) About Iraq, Reid said, in April 2007, "This war is lost, and the surge is not accomplishing anything." He also allowed, "We're going to pick up Senate seats as a result of this war. Senator Schumer has shown me numbers that are compelling and astounding." (Chuck Schumer was in charge of Democratic Senate campaigns.) That statement was jarringly naked, predicting political gains from an agonizing war. In any case, for whatever reason, the Democrats did indeed pick up seats.

Reid can be disarmingly frank, even when he steps in it—or *especially* when he steps in it. He commented on the new Capitol Visitors Center, and its air conditioning. You remember? "My staff tells me not to say this, but I'm going to say it anyway: In the summer, because of the heat and high humidity, you could literally smell the tourists coming into the Capitol." A lot of us smiled over that "My staff tells me not to say this, but . . ."

And he can be downright puzzling and odd. Two years ago, Rush Limbaugh blasted "phony soldiers," meaning, people who pre-



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But there was no mistake. And after returning home, I had 20 carats of these exquisite emeralds strung up in 14k gold and wrapped as a gift for my wife's birthday. That's when my trouble began. She loved it. Absolutely adored it. In fact, she rarely goes anywhere without the necklace and has basked in compliments from total strangers for months now.

So what's the problem? I'm never going to find an emerald deal this good again. In giving her such a perfect gift, I've made it impossible to top myself.

To make matters worse, my wife's become obsessed with emeralds. She can't stop sharing stories about how Cleopatra cherished the green gem above all others and how emeralds were worshiped by the Incas and Mayans and prized by Spanish conquistadors and Indian maharajahs. She's even buying into ancient beliefs that emeralds bring intelligence, well-being and good luck to anyone who wears them. I don't have the heart to tell her that I'm never going to find another deal this lucky.

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tended to have been in Iraq but were not. Reid, evidently misunderstanding him, called him "unpatriotic." He also got 40 other Democratic senators to sign a letter denouncing Limbaugh. In a typically imaginative move, Limbaugh obtained the letter: and auctioned it on eBay. He got $2.1 million for it, and chipped in that same amount himself. The money went to the Marine Corps-Law Enforcement Foundation, which provides scholarships to children of the fallen.

In the middle of all this, Reid took to the Senate floor—and kind of took credit for acting *in concert* with Rush, to benefit these children. "I strongly believe that when we can put our differences aside, even Harry Reid and Rush Limbaugh, we should do that and try to accomplish good things for the American people." You will seldom see something so brazen, so audacious, and so galling, even in politics.

REID has friends on the Republican side of the aisle—most conspicuously, his fellow Nevada senator, John Ensign (whom Reid once beat in an extremely close race). Other Republican senators have ambivalent feelings about Reid. One senator says, "He's a little bit of a Jekyll and Hyde: your best pal one minute, excoriating you the next." But most Republicans are not ambivalent, and there is, in fact, a GOP consensus about Reid. It is a sharply negative one. The majority leader himself declined to be interviewed for this article. But Republican senators and their staffers talked freely—if mainly off the record—and their consensus is this:

Reid is acting as an instrument of the Democratic Left, unwilling to negotiate and cut deals. He is as partisan as Dodd, Kennedy, Leahy, and all the others you associate with hard partisanship. He is unusually thin-skinned, and he blows his stack more than a Senate leader really should. He shows signs of "small-man syndrome": putting his dukes up, spoiling for a fight, having to prove something. He scraps and scrapes when some diplomacy is in order. If reading from a script, he does fine. But when he goes off script—he's a disaster for the Democrats, making gaffes and causing controversies.

And all of this (continues the consensus) is good for the Republicans. He is not an effective leader for the Democrats. He is too touchy, too blundering, too alienating. He can win ugly, as he did in the recent stimulus fight, now that he has all those votes. But what if some finesse is needed?

One of the wisest things I heard from a senator, in collecting opinion about Reid, was, "He is who his party wants him to be." The Democratic party is in a left-wing, arrogant, and aggressive mood. And they are, of course, winning, giving them little incentive to change.

But Reid is up for reelection in 2010, and the Republicans have their eye on him. They hope to "Daschle" him, which is to say, knock off the Democratic leader. They will claim that Reid, in his big national post, has slid to the left of Nevada, just as Daschle slid to the left of South Dakota. Harry Reid will have plenty of money, and he is nothing if not dogged. But he is far from a sure thing. One savvy Republican puts it this way: "If 2010 is a favorable year for the Democrats, he'll survive. But if it turns out that Obama is leaking oil, Harry could be in big trouble." In the meantime, he will be strong on the scene, one of the Democrats' three kings, not the most glamorous, but an American original, and a peppery, pugilistic little so-and-so. **NR**

Losing GORDON GEKKO

Wall Street has gone over to the Democrats. Should conservatives miss it?

BY KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON

IN the sweating-bullets world of venture capital, start-ups live or die by The Pitch—the one-shot better-get-this-right opportunity an entrepreneur has to sell his idea to the people who have the money to make it happen. Barack Obama, the most successful start-up in modern American politics, made his pitch to 20-odd gorilla-league hedge-fund barons and Wall Street money managers early in the Democratic primary season. He wasn't yet the front runner, and the room wasn't necessarily ready to be impressed. New York money was already invested in the presidential aspirations of home-state senator Hillary Clinton, and Chuck Schumer, who had been merciless in his campaign to wring money out of Wall Street for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, was backing her. So were the CEOs of JPMorgan Chase, Goldman Sachs, and Morgan Stanley. Obama's net assets: one famous speech.

Pitching Wall Street, Obama didn't chew through his usual mouthful of Hope and Change. This was a room full of George Soros–level players, not the sort of people who get a buzz from inhaling the heady vapors of Obama's pharmaceutical-grade oratory. Instead of his usual homily, Obama delivered what one insider describes as a "blistering attack" on the American public-school bureaucracy in general and on teachers' unions in particular. Busting chops—that got Wall Street's attention. He said he was close—"*this* close"—to supporting vouchers, an almost unthinkably heterodox position for a Democrat seeking the keys to the executive suite. But hedge-fund guys spend good coin sending their precious bundles to Choate and Greenwich Country Day School, and they like the idea of education reform. Obama must have been convincing: Nearly three-fourths of the hedge-fund and buyout-firm money that found its way into the two major 2008 presidential candidates' campaigns went to Obama. He'd taken $2,000 from Tony Rezko and a loan from a Chicago Cadillac dealer and turned it into a $750 million political enterprise. Never mind Colin Powell, the Republicans had lost Gordon Gekko, and the Goldman Sachs Democrats were back in business.

Not that they'd ever gone away.

The Democrats—the party of George Soros and dodgy cattle futures—have long profited by denouncing Republicans as the party of Wall Street, a raggedy front for a gang of amoral money-runners pulling the strings of their puppets in Washington. It's a useful narrative for Democrats, but it isn't true. Wall Street may have a few more pachyderms roaming around than the rest of Manhattan, but the world of bulls and bears is also a world of donkeys.

KARL ROVE, MICHAEL NOVAK & FR. ROBERT SIRICO sign on as new speakers

2009 Mediterranean Cruise

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DAY/DATE	PORT	ARRIVE/DEPART	SPECIAL EVENT
Wed/July 8	Rome/Civitavecchia	5PM	
Thur/July 9	AT SEA		morning, afternoon seminars evening cocktail reception
Fri/July 10	Dubrovnik, Croatia	8AM-6PM	late-night smoker
Sat/July 11	Corfu, Greece	8AM-6PM	
Sun/July 12	Katakolon, Greece	7AM-2PM	afternoon seminar evening cocktail reception
Mon/July 13	Santorini, Greece	8AM-9PM	
Tue/July 14	Ephesus, Turkey	7AM-7PM	"night owl" session
Wed/July 15	Piraeus, Greece	8AM-6PM	"night owl" session
Thur/July 16	AT SEA		morning, afternoon seminars late-night smoker
Fri/July 17	Messina, Sicily	7AM-2PM	afternoon seminar evening cocktail reception
Sat/July 18	Rome/Civitavecchia	7AM	

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Goldman Sachs is one firm that's learned that politics matters: The sinking investment bank received some $12 billion in bailout funds while its competitor, Lehman Brothers, was allowed to go bankrupt. Goldman operators move easily between government and the private sector and have played key roles in both Democratic and Republican administrations. But like the rest of Wall Street, they have tilted heavily Democratic of late. Goldman Sachs was the biggest business donor to Democrats in 2008, according to a Center for Responsive Politics report. Some 73 percent of Goldman Sachs's millions in 2006–08 donations went to Democrats, but its outlook has been informed by bipartisan pragmatism: The banking bailout came from a Republican administration and was marketed by Goldman Sachs alumnus Hank Paulson, who literally begged, on bended knee, for the money. It was managed by assistant treasury secretary and former Goldman Sachs foot soldier Neel Kashkari and was politically nudged along by Bush's chief of staff, Josh Bolton, another Goldman veteran.

With Democrats now controlling the elected branches in Washington, Goldman has an even stronger hand: Former chairman Robert Rubin is the dean of the Goldman Sachs Democrats, the group that ran economic policy under the Clinton administration and is doing the same under Obama. Rubin acolytes Larry Summers, Timothy Geithner, and Peter Orszag already are filling key economic-policy positions, and Rubin's son, Jamie, is raising money on Wall Street for Democrats and acting as a talent scout for the Obama administration. The elder Rubin is sure to have the ear of all the major players. Geithner, hurt in the ruckus over his unpaid taxes, has turned to the bank for a reliable loyalist, hiring former Goldman lobbyist Mark Patterson as his top aide. And Geithner's replacement at the New York Fed? William C. Dudley, former managing director of Goldman Sachs.

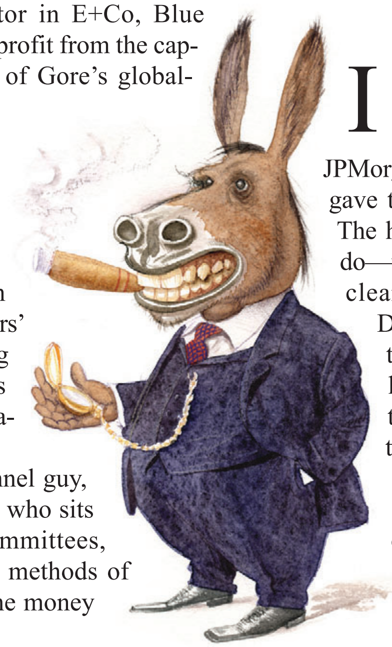
Other major nodes on the Goldman-Democratic nexus include Al Gore's London-based private-equity firm, Generation Investment Management, which was founded with assistance from former Goldman boss Paulson and includes in its ranks a half dozen prominent Goldman veterans. Former Goldman Sachs Asset Management CEO David Blood is its CEO, earning the firm its nickname, "Blood and Gore." Goldman Sachs is a significant investor in E+Co, Blue Source, and APX, all firms positioned to profit from the cap-and-trade schemes that are at the heart of Gore's global-warming crusade.

Across the river from Wall Street, former Goldman Sachs chairman Gov. Jon Corzine of New Jersey was a major player on financial policy when he was in the Senate and has lobbied hard for the bailout as governor. He's sounded a note of caution on the bank rescue but is shoveling taxpayers' dollars into other corporate coffers, working to secure government funds to keep Wyeth's New Jersey campus intact after the pharmaceutical firm's merger with Pfizer.

Not to be outdone by a bridge-and-tunnel guy, Senator Schumer, the New York grandee who sits on the Senate finance and banking committees, and who is infamous for his aggressive methods of shaking campaign contributions out of the money movers, raised $6 million from Wall Street for his last race—a pro forma campaign against an obscure Republican with one-tenth the cash. Schumer's tactics for extracting campaign money from Wall Street when he was head of the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee were so aggressive that Sen. Arlen Specter accused him of using congressional inquiries in part as a fundraising tool. But it's hard to weep for Wall Street when it is getting such a rich return on its political investments: Schumer drove a stake through the heart of tax-code changes that would have treated "carried interest"—the source of many private-equity fortunes—as regular income for tax purposes, instead of taxing it as a capital gain. As it stands, a private-equity manager who makes a billion dollars pays 15 percent in taxes on carried interest, while a guy earning a salary of $34,000 is in the 25 percent income-tax bracket.

Schumer's opposite number in the House before he became Obama's chief of staff was Rahm Emanuel, a former investment banker who worked with politically connected utility companies at Wasserstein Perella. Emanuel was the House's No. 1 recipient of money from hedge funds, private-equity firms, and the wide-ranging securities industry while he was running the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. And like Schumer, he made it rain.

The Democrats are reaching out well beyond Goldman Sachs and the rest of Wall Street. The big activist investors, CEOs, and corporate chairmen are trending Democrat, too. Warren Buffett came out for Obama, and during the debates the candidate cited his association with the investment guru to dispel concerns about his other associations, particularly with Weather Underground terrorist Bill Ayers. There are a few Republican-leaning activist investors, Carl Icahn prominent among them. But, as Matthew Wurtzel writes in *The Deal*, "while Icahn considers himself an activist investor, he really doesn't fit politically with his peers—no big surprise—who overwhelmingly invested with the Democrats. Only one leading activist, Philip Falcone of Harbinger Capital Partners, put his money behind a Republican in the form of Rudy Giuliani, who later refunded the donation." And Icahn himself is a mixed bag, making investments in both liberal Republicans and high-yield Democrats such as Jeanne Shaheen and Mark Warner.



ROMAN GENN

In 2006 and 2008, Wall Street poured money on Democrats. Big Wall Street firms that made major political contributions—including Citigroup, JPMorgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, UBS, and Lehman—gave the majority of their contributions to Democrats. The hedge funds followed suit, as they are inclined to do—they depend on the big Wall Street institutions to clear their trades. And it wasn't just Wall Street: Democrats led in six of the ten big-business sectors tracked by the Center for Responsive Politics: law, health care, defense contractors, communications/electronics, finance/insurance/real estate, and the catch-all category that includes chemical firms, retailers, manufacturers, food processors, and other industrial operators. Republicans held on to agriculture—which is, not coincidentally, the industry in which they are the least interested in practicing capitalism: It's not the philosophical com-

advertisement

IDENTITY THEFT ALERT:

Special Report: Tax-related identity theft up over 600%

It appears tax season is also hunting season for identity thieves.

According to a report by the IRS, tax related identity theft increased by more than six times over the past five years.

"And that was following an increase of over 1000 percent between 1999 and 2003," said Todd Davis, CEO of LifeLock, the nation's leading identity theft protection service.

"Identity theft has absolutely become one of the biggest problems we have facing taxpayers," Davis added.

Refund-related crimes can occur when identity thieves use a victim's identity to file a fraudulent tax return and receive a refund before the victim files their real return. Identity thieves can also put in change of address requests so your return goes to their address.

"Some criminals still get your check the old fashioned way – by simply stealing your mail," Davis said. "But more and more, all identity theft is switching to online forums."

How Big of a Problem is Identity Theft?

In this electronic age your information is everywhere. Even if you're careful, you can't be sure everyone you conduct business with is as safe as you are.

In 2008, approximately 33.6 million records containing sensitive information were involved in security breaches. That's given rise to a 22% increase in identity theft victims over the previous year and a five-year high of nearly 10 million victims at a cost of $48 billion.

Financial costs aside, identity theft victims can spend hundreds of frustrating hours talking to credit card companies, banks, police, and credit bureaus repairing the damage.

When you factor in that thieves may hold onto information for six months or longer before using it, and that a single stolen identity may be used over and over again for years, the full weight of the crime really begins to take shape.

One victim had two homes purchased and furnished using her name and personal information. Then, to add insult to injury, the thieves took out second mortgages on both homes as well.

Another had his identity stolen at age seven, but didn't find out until ten years later when he was denied a student loan and a job due to poor credit. He was 17-years old and $40,000 in debt because someone bought a houseboat in his name. It took him 10 years to clear his name.

Yes, That's His Real Number

So why is LifeLock CEO Todd Davis still giving out his real Social Security number to anyone who will listen?

"Because between LifeLock's proactive approach and our $1 Million Total Service Guarantee, I'm more confident than ever in LifeLock's ability to continue keeping my identity safe," Davis said.

- *A 22% increase in identity theft victims.*
- *A five-year high of nearly 10 million victims.*

"Of course, you should never share your Social Security number unless completely necessary," he added, "but for the record, mine really is 457-55-5462."

LifeLock became the nation's leader in identity theft protection by taking a proactive approach to protecting consumers' identities from criminals. Why is that so important?

In the past, many people looked to credit monitoring after becoming victims of identity theft. According to Davis, that was the problem.

"Credit monitoring does nothing to stop identity theft. It only alerts you after there has been suspicious activity on your account," Davis said. "LifeLock works to help stop identity theft before it happens by taking proactive steps to reduce the risk of identity thieves ruining your credit and good name – even if your information falls into the wrong hands."

More importantly, what LifeLock doesn't stop, they promise to fix at their expense, up to $1,000,000. That's their $1 Million Total Service Guarantee.

Does It Work? Look at the Facts.

"With over a million LifeLock members, statistically you would expect to see over 30,000 identity thefts annually, costing our members hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars," Davis said.

"Now, those are thefts that would come under the protection of our $1 Million Total Service Guarantee, so our members would be out nothing. But we haven't seen anywhere near 30,000 victims. We haven't even seen 300."

The fact is, less than one percent of over one million LifeLock members have ever reported a compromised identity, and because of LifeLock's guarantee, none of them were ever out the time or money experienced by other victims.

Protection for All.

Davis says there are steps you can take to minimize your risk, but he believes a consumers best bet is to protect themselves with a service like LifeLock.

"LifeLock works around the clock monitoring criminal websites for the illegal selling and trading of our members' information," Davis said. "We also notify members when a change of address is made in their name to make sure it's not an identity thief rerouting their mail."

In addition, LifeLock will have your name taken off of pre-approved credit card lists, and help put you in greater control of who has access to your credit.

"And of course all our members have the peace of mind knowing they're protected by our $1 Million Total Service Guarantee," he added. "There's a reason we're #1."

If you'd like to have the same peace of mind this tax season that Davis and the rest of LifeLock's members enjoy, he'd like to give you LifeLock free for 30 days, plus a 10% discount off the regular membership price. Simply visit lifelock.com or call 800-LIFELOCK and use promotion code NATIONALREVIEW.

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mitment to free markets that opens up corporate checkbooks, but the promise of favorable exceptions to those principles.

So why is the bulls-and-bears set going donkey? Partly it's self-interest: Wall Street loves a tax break, but Big Money has over the years found a lot to love about Big Government. Those carbon-offset exchanges may be clearinghouses for products that are, in essence, imaginary, but they are going to make a real bundle for the bankers who set them up—and, since they'll inevitably have the support of government, there will be relatively little risk involved. And Democrats' anti-war talk hasn't spooked the defense contractors. For all the conspiracy-mongering about Halliburton Republicans, now that Democrats control defense appropriations it's no surprise to find the likes of Rep. Ike Skelton, the Democrat who chairs the House Armed Services Committee, enjoying the support of military providers such as Armor Holdings Inc. What is surprising is that Democrats now lead Republicans overall in financial support from defense firms.

When Obama made his case for the stimulus bill—which is larded with corporate welfare—he was flanked by two big-league CEOs: IBM's Sam Palmisano and Honeywell's Dave Cote. For many on the anti-war left—the people who elevated Obama over Clinton during the primary—Honeywell is a war profiteer, only a little less detestable than Halliburton. You'd think this would chap the hide of the Democrats' progressive wing. For the most part, you'd be wrong, though a few on the left, such as Harold Meyerson, have scolded the Democrats for courting capital. Success has a way of pre-empting criticism: Democrats may have kidded Clinton about being the best Republican president since Gerald Ford—Clinton himself raged that he'd been turned into Dwight Eisenhower—but they loved him, even if he is today seen less as the second coming of FDR than as John the Baptist to Obama's Jesus Christ Superstar. But there's no denying Clinton's great political accomplishment in making peace between the Democrats and Big Business—and cutting into Republicans' credibility on the economy.

WALL STREET isn't politically agnostic, and there's more to its politics than money. Culture matters, and you won't find a lot of Pentecostal churches in Greenwich, Conn. Wall Street guys, for the most part, do not have time for social conservatives. "Of course these guys aren't conservative," says one longtime bond trader. "Why the [expletive deleted] would they be? We're talking about guys who live in Manhattan, guys with manicures and eight-figure bank balances. And their wives—their wives aren't showing up at parents' day at Brearley with a Sarah Palin button. It'd be like showing up in flip-flops from Wal-Mart. Like showing up in a [rather lengthier expletive deleted] tracksuit."

This cultural divide is particularly visible in New York City politics. "Ten to 15 years ago, half of the Upper East Side [officeholders] were Republican," says John Mills, executive vice president of the Lexington Democratic Club. "There's not one Republican there now. Abortion and gay rights are two of the biggest issues, and there are a lot of Jewish voters here not comfortable with Christian conservatives."

Wall Street has no love for the southern, rural, and evangelical. But it's not just the Jesus stuff—the southern and rural parts matter, too: Republican congressmen tend to represent places like Glasscock County, Texas, America's most Republican jurisdiction, which reliably gives 90-odd percent of its votes to the GOP. Those districts are not going to feel the pain of the financial markets the way New York, New Jersey, California, and Connecticut are. The bailout is not very popular in farm country. Wall Street knew there was a gathering storm in the markets, and it didn't want to find itself at the mercy of small-town and rural Republicans' riding to the rescue.

"I think it was a feeling in their bones," says David M. Smick, a financial-market adviser and the author of *The World Is Curved*. "And they probably thought that, when you got down to it, the Republicans came from districts that would not be affected by a real downturn in the financial markets."

The Republicans' loss of Wall Street magnifies an ancient fissure in the party, a conservative contradiction: the misalignment of incentives between the party's free-enterprise wing and its entrenched business interests.

"The problem with socialism is socialism," Willi Schlamm famously observed. "The problem with capitalism is capitalists." From Wall Street to Detroit, businessmen have had at best a marriage of convenience with free-market principles, a fact that often puts the Republican party in the impossible position of mediating between philosophical purists and parochial business interests that profit from expansive government, protectionism, and regulations that smother competition. Republicans have long thought of themselves as the party of Big Business and free enterprise but, as Wall Street sends its money and votes to Democrats and snuggles up in an ever-cozier relationship with the government, Republicans face the choice of being the party of Big Business *or* the party of free enterprise—the party of capitalists or the party of capitalism.

The Democrats have already decided which party they are. Which is to say, the Democrats have figured out that they can keep Wall Street in their coalition by offering them easygoing social liberalism, a few sweet tax breaks, and good access to government revenue streams. Republicans are not above the same deal-cutting and back-scratching, obviously, but they have a knottier coalitional contradiction to resolve: The capitalists don't want capitalism, and neither do a lot of mid-American social conservatives. Even as Reagan talked about the miracle of the invisible hand, the blue-collar social conservatives who put him in office indulged in a near-paranoid loathing of Japan—an economic phobia that is still very much alive in Republican heartland attitudes toward trade with China and India. George W. Bush talked up free trade—except on steel, sugar, and most agricultural commodities. The Republicans' philosophy is informed by free-market idealists who celebrate the wonders of Schumpeterian "creative destruction," but the guys flying business class would much rather sink into a nice warm bailout and let capitalism creatively destroy somebody else's money—the taxpayers' money, for instance. The bankers are the last guys who want free markets right now, and so it's no surprise to find them writing big checks to the Democrats. But against all evidence, Republicans remain the party of Wall Street in the public imagination.

"That's the irony of it all," says Smick. "But really, isn't that the job of a CEO—in addition to managing, to get a special deal? To get yourself protection? That's what you do, whether it's a monopoly, or the ultimate backstop, the ultimate hedge: the taxpayer."

Welcome to the hedge-fund racket, America. **NR**

The Long View

BY ROB LONG

Excerpts from the unread parts of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

FROM PAGE 237:

. . . for an additional amount for "Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations," $290,000,000, of which $145,000,000 is for necessary expenses to purchase and restore floodplain easements as authorized by section 403 of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2203) (except that no more than $30,000,000 of the amount provided for the purchase of floodplain easements may be obligated for projects in any one state) is anybody reading this? Anybody? Hello? I've been sitting here with the other interns in Congress and we're trying to type this as fast as we can, but this is going to be my little test. Anybody who reads this part of the stimulus bill and gets all the way to this part, I've taken $1,000 in cash and hidden it behind the loose panel next to the third drinking fountain on the right as you enter the Russell Senate Office Building. It'll be there. The money cost of direct and guaranteed loans, including the cost of modifying loans, as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, is as follows: $67,000,000 for section 502 direct loans, and $133,000,000 for section 502 unsubsidized guaranteed . . .

FROM PAGE 455:

. . . tax-payer refunds and/or easements of preexisting taxation standards for capital expenses specifically aimed at the reduction of current energy usage for office or light-industrial construction hi Deborah Stangle! This is a special part of the stimulus bill that I'm putting in just for you. How are you? How are things? I'm doing okay, working as an intern here in the House of Representatives. Working for Charlie Rangel on this big stimulus bill, which nobody is ever really going to read anyway, so I'm taking this opportunity to say something publicly that I should have said when we were back at Pasco High. I love you, Deborah. I always have. From the day you walked into Mr. Frank's homeroom in ninth grade until the day you left right after graduation in your dad's . . . Suburban, was that it? Anyway, I love you, and I've never had the courage to say this and I probably never will have the courage to say it, but I thought I'd at least take the opportunity to have it officially recognized by the federal government how hot I think you are. Although I know nobody is ever going to read this part. So, basically, I'm a loser. If I had any courage I'd say how I feel and say it in a place I know people will actually see. My roommates are right. I'm such a dumbass. Just forget I said anything assistance program as reported to the Department of Agriculture over the most recent twelve-month period for which data are available, adjusted by the secretary (as of the date of enactment) for participation in disaster programs under section 5(h) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2014(h)) . . .

FROM PAGE 1,276:

. . . pursuant to state and local governments' successful application and adherence to established federal guidelines under Sect. IX ii, (A) it is hereby ordered that the student-loan obligations of the entire group of House and Senate interns, pages, and office workers, as of Jan. 1, 2009, are hereby nullified and terminated and made zero, also, each one of them is going to get a brand new iPhone loaded with free apps, plus other cool stuff to be added as necessary in follow-on amendments which I know nobody is going to read either. It's like we can write anything here and get it passed and it becomes, like, the law of the land. I could write anything I want, like my parents have to stop hassling me about my law-school applications and it would be totally the law in a second. Marijuana, legal, bam! And also: The girl who works on the Senate Ag staff who acts like she doesn't know me is hereby required by law to acknowledge that she does know me and that we met through her roommate's college friend, and it is hereby writ under federal law that she must dine with me (Dutch) at least twice before declaring a lack of interest in my company. This is the LAW now, totally, so if you don't do this, Michelle, I will have you ARRESTED. (1) such funds shall be available for the purpose of covering salaries and related administrative expenses, including technical assistance, associated with the implementation of the program, without regard to the limitation on the total amount of allotments and fund transfers contained in section 11 of the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714i) . . .

Books, Arts & Manners

Such a Catholic

RALPH C. WOOD

In 1972 Flannery O'Connor was posthumously honored with the National Book Award for her *Complete Stories*. As her publisher, Robert Giroux, was readying himself to receive this highest of American literary prizes, he was caught short when an eminent author asked, "Do you really think Flannery O'Connor was a great writer? She's such a Roman Catholic." Brad Gooch might well have begun his much-anticipated biography—***Flannery: A Life of Flannery O'Connor*** (Little, Brown, 416 pp., $30)—with this remarkable charge. Instead, he places it on the penultimate page. This decision is regrettable, for it leaves us still needing the book that hasn't been written during the 45 years since O'Connor's death in 1964: a critical biography showing that her life and work are quite incomprehensible apart from her being "such a Roman Catholic."

The problem is not merely that O'Connor fell prey to the anti-Catholicism that remains the only acceptable bigotry among some American intellectuals. She did, of course, endure the condescension of such ex-Catholics as Mary McCarthy, who said: "Considering how intelligent she was, [O'Connor] was more pious than any other Catholic I've ever known." The deeper problem is far more perplexing: Why, prior to Flannery O'Connor, had this country—the only Western nation "with the soul of a church," as G. K. Chesterton famously said—failed to produce a single major writer whose work is Christian in both form and substance? Why would a triple outsider to the American project—a self-declared advocate of 13th-century Catholicism, a southerner who refused to apologize for the evils of her region, a sympathizer with backwoods Protestant fundamentalists—become this country's first thoroughly Christian writer of fiction? Why are nearly all of our eminent writers—Emerson, Thoreau, Dickinson, Melville, Poe, Hawthorne, Twain, James, Frost, Faulkner—heterodox at best, atheist or even nihilist at worst? Why was Flannery O'Connor the first distinguished American writer to have her imagination shaped by the scandalous claims of the Gospel? Why, above all, does her greatness lie precisely in her being "such a Roman Catholic," a Christian convinced that the triune God has uniquely and definitively identified Himself and His will for the world in the Jews and Jesus and the Church?

These unanswered questions point to what is truly remarkable about Flannery O'Connor. She was a woman who died at age 39; a southerner who except for seven years lived an almost reclusive life in the small city of Milledgeville, Ga.; a fiction writer who during her lifetime produced only two novels (*Wise Blood* and *The Violent Bear It Away*) and a single collection of short stories (*A Good Man Is Hard to Find*); an author who left only three more books to be published after her death—another collection of short stories (*Everything That Rises Must Converge*), a gathering of essays (*Mystery and Manners*), and a large sampling of her letters (*The Habit of Being*).

Gooch lays O'Connor's genuine distinctiveness to the side, and thus fails to bring her life into the sharp focus it demands. His biography has no overarching theme, no compelling trajectory, no revealing figure in the carpet. He seems to believe that O'Connor was a *rara avis*, but his main evidence is that, as a child, she trained a chicken to walk backward and that, as an adult, she raised peafowl and other exotic birds. The patronizing intimacy of Gooch's title turns out, moreover, to be a distancing device. Instead of probing the complex depths of "Flannery," Gooch has written a jauntily superficial book.

It has become virtually standard procedure, among interpreters of Gooch's kind, to say that O'Connor's life and work must not be confined or reduced to her Catholicism, that she had not merely one but many strings on her fiddle, that we deny the variousness of her fiction by concentrating chiefly on its religious quality. Gooch establishes the small truth con-

Mr. Wood, a professor of theology and literature at Baylor University, is the author of Flannery O'Connor and the Christ-Haunted South.

At the 'autograph party' for *Wise Blood,* Georgia State College for Women, 1952

WISE BLOOD
Flannery O'Connor
WISE BLOOD
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tained in this charge by showing that O'Connor did not confine herself within a religious cocoon but was keenly attuned to writers as various as T. S. Eliot and Guy de Maupassant, Caroline Gordon and William Faulkner, and even J. D. Salinger. He also demonstrates that O'Connor was remarkably alert to popular culture, finding both irony and revelation in seedy clichés and banal commercials. Having seen a hucksterish stunt for a film called *Mark of the Gorilla*, she put it to hilarious use in *Wise Blood*, where an ape impersonator greets moviegoers in order to boost attendance. Yet Gooch doesn't take time to observe the significance of Enoch Emery, the youth who seeks the tawdry fame of this pseudo-simian: Cut off from religious rituals that might have given redemptive shape to his life, Emery must invent his own ceremonial patterns for living. He bases his life on the vain promises of advertisements, making their blandishments his credo. The result is something at once farcical and pathetic, as Emery becomes a telling caricature of our unacknowledged nihilism.

Instead of attending to such moral discernments, Gooch chooses to make Freudian readings that obfuscate rather than clarify. He interprets the brilliant brat in "A Temple of the Holy Ghost" as wrestling with her dawning erotic desires, arguing that her sexuality is finally "sublimated in religious expression." Such sexual preoccupations blind Gooch to the child's real problem: She is afflicted with a condition far more fundamental than her prepubescent sexuality—namely, her religious pride as a Roman Catholic. O'Connor the Catholic, Gooch might have noticed, is far from uncritical of her Catholicism. Missing such subtleties, Gooch declares that there is a hidden "Jansenist aspect of Flannery's character." He also speaks condescendingly of O'Connor's "intact innocence," as if she were a naïve virgin who feared and loathed her carnality.

It's true that, as one inexperienced in sexual love, O'Connor was reluctant to depict erotic relations. When asked why there is no romance in her work, she candidly replied that she had no firsthand knowledge of such love and thus did not make it central to her art. Instead, she confined her fiction almost entirely to comic encounters between the sexes. And wildly funny they often are. Hazel Motes, the young protagonist of *Wise Blood*, flees from his calling to be a minister of the Gospel by setting out "to do some things I have never done before," thus proving that, as he says, "I'm no goddam preacher." And so he visits a prostitute named Leora Watts. Yet this motherly moll comically deflates Motes's vision of himself as a sexual raptor by treating him as a child: "Momma don't mind if you ain't a preacher."

Gooch occasions his own unintended comedy when he describes O'Connor as "spinning" Thomism for Elizabeth Hester, her close friend and most important correspondent. That O'Connor sought to "pitch" the rigors of the *Summa Theologiae* so as to make them less discomfiting is hilariously wrongheaded. On the contrary, she made fun of herself as a "hillbilly Thomist," knowing well that she had barely penetrated the surface of the great theologian's work, and that she needed the help of such authentic Thomists as Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson in order to find a real Catholic basis for her art.

She learned, especially from Maritain's *Art and Scholasticism*, that art is "a virtue of the practical intellect," and that the excellence of a work of art is not found in its moral effect on audiences but in the fulfillment of its own inherent requirements. The artist seeks to order matter to form, so that everything is necessary, nothing extraneous or tendentious. "Art is reason in making," was St. Thomas's lapidary saying, a definition that O'Connor found "very cold and very beautiful." The single virtue required of a fiction writer, it follows, is mastery of the craft: plot and character and point of view, scene and setting and atmosphere. When these are properly apportioned and integrated—with no hectoring message or false sympathy—the result is an artistic whole that redounds to the good of both God and man.

This is a lesson that O'Connor had also learned from Andrew Lytle, a southern writer, at the University of Iowa. Lytle admonished her to "sink the theme"—to integrate artistic means and ends so fully that her fiction could not be reduced to abstract paraphrase. When Harvey Breit, a New York television interviewer, asked an awkward and ill-at-ease O'Connor whether she would like to explain what happens in "The Life You Save May Be Your Own," she wasn't rattled. "No," she curtly replied, "I certainly would not."

It came as almost a relief for Flannery O'Connor to find, as Gooch notes, that "you don't have to be good to write well." Far from encouraging O'Connor to live a self-indulgent life, neglecting the corporal works of mercy required by her Christianity, this insight enabled O'Connor to practice what Maritain called "the habit of art." The word *habit* does not here refer to the daily routine of working at her typewriter for three hours, although this was indeed O'Connor's regimen. *Habitus*, in Aquinas's sense, means the formation of the mind and the will, the intellect and the heart, through long exercise and steady devotion to particular practices—in O'Connor's case, to the rigorous requirements of her art.

When seen in this light, O'Connor's self-confessed "anti-social" disposition can be understood as anything but misanthropic. A loner who often was awkward in public, O'Connor knew well that, if she became a "hale-woman-well-met," she would never harvest the fruits of her genius. No wonder, then, that she glared even at her friends when they disrupted her quasi-monastic discipline of writing and rewriting. Nor should her self-confessed "disappointed look" be taken as evidence that she lived a disappointed life. In declaring that she was "born disenchanted," O'Connor does not refer to a native sourness of disposition so much as to the disenchantment we all suffer for being the progeny of Adam and Eve.

Already as a young child, O'Connor envisioned herself as a thorough but unsentimental kind of Christian. When told that she was being watched over by guardian angels, for example, she flailed at them in the air, determined to rout all pious notions of divine protection. She was unabashedly eccentric in the admirable and literal sense of the word—not in easy disdain for the masses, but in candid recognition that Christians are necessarily *ex-centric*, pivoting about another Center than the world's hub or their own ego.

O'Connor's recognition that she was called to be a writer was linked with her simultaneous discovery that there is nothing larger than the Gospel and the Church, since they reenact the drama of the entire cosmos. In order to be *catholic* (universal), she had first to be *Catholic*, ordering everything—however imperfectly—to the goodness of the triune God. During the three years she was a graduate student in Iowa City, for instance, she attended Mass

Seated beneath her self-portrait, Milledgeville, Ga., 1962

JOE McTYRE/*ATLANTA CONSTITUTION*

at the same Catholic parish, but without ever meeting a single soul, either clerical or lay. "It was not necessary," she wrote. "As soon as I went in the door I was at home." She was at home in the Body of Christ, not as a refuge from the world's menacing reality, but as the locus of the Reality that menaces *us* with its truth and beauty and goodness. "GO WARN THE CHILDREN OF GOD OF THE TERRIBLE SPEED OF MERCY" is the command that Francis Marion Tarwater hears and heeds at the end of *The Violent Bear It Away*.

Flannery O'Connor found herself sent on a similarly urgent mission at a now-famous dinner party hosted by Mary McCarthy. Having recently "outgrown" Catholicism, McCarthy opined that she still found eucharistic symbolism literarily useful, even though she didn't believe any of its hocus-pocus. With a candor not usually encountered at New York social gatherings, the usually taciturn O'Connor could not remain silent, even at the cost of giving great offense. "Well," she said, "if it's a symbol, then to hell with it." Gooch makes nothing of this scandalous claim, nor does he deal with O'Connor's later elaboration: "That was all the defense I was capable of but I realize now that this is all I will ever be able to say about it, outside of a story, except that it is the center of existence for me; all the rest of life is expendable."

The Eucharist does not merely point or gesture toward something vaguely transcendent, O'Connor was saying; it sacramentally enacts the Reality it declares: This is Christ's life-giving body and blood, the feast without which we are literally starved of life. Or else it is a snare and a delusion that should be denounced as such. Gooch observes, instead, that O'Connor "framed her new life in religion" when her illness compelled her to return home and live with her mother back in Milledgeville for the last dozen years. Quite to the contrary, O'Connor had *already* framed her life—both literary and existential—in her Catholicism. "I am a Catholic not like someone else would be a Baptist or a Methodist," she said, "but like someone else would be an atheist."

A Peter De Vries character describes an atheist as someone who cannot forgive God for not existing. An authentic atheist is a God-botherer, one who cannot rest at ease in unbelief. O'Connor admired Sartre and Camus for the vigor of their unbelief, precisely because she herself wrestled with the demon of doubt. Long before she contracted the lupus that eventually killed her, O'Connor was grappling with the godless horrors of her century. "If you live today," she wrote, "you breathe in nihilism. In or out of the Church, it's the gas you breathe." Spiritual and bodily calamities are closely related. Ours is the age of ashes, she discerned, because it is also the culture of death. This explains why her fiction is at once so comical and so grotesque, why her characters and plots are simultaneously shocking and redemptive. She wants to render the dreadful disorders of our age, while also artistically revealing their potential to be reordered to the appalling love of God.

For Flannery O'Connor, a civil religion of "Do Unto Others" will never suffice. It has no metaphysical foundations to undergird it, no sacramental or prophetic communities to sustain it. Though her region was wracked with racial violence, O'Connor dealt head-on with the race question in but a single story, "The Artificial Nigger." The problem wasn't that racial injustice failed to arrest her imagination so much as that its solution required no keen moral discernment. As a Walker Percy character declares, the one thing requisite is obedience to a single command: Stop abusing Negroes. For similar reasons, O'Connor was drawn to southern fundamentalists, despite their inveterate scorn for Catholicism as the "whore of Babylon." Like them, she sought something far more needful than political equality: the Faith that heals racial reformers of their false righteousness no less than racial bigots of their true sinfulness. Gooch misses the mark, therefore, when he says that O'Connor is guilty of "a type of artistic racism" for not seeking, by her own confession, to get inside the minds of her black characters. If O'Connor had focused her fiction on such matters, she might have become another Lillian Smith (the author of the 1944 novel *Strange Fruit*). But she might also have failed to become the greater writer she in fact became.

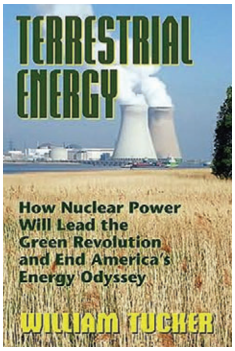
As Hazel Motes discovers, authentic faith is often acquired through the rear door, after all other alternatives have been exhausted. Motes has returned from World War II as nihilist preacher and sole member of his self-invented though unironically named "Church Without Christ." Though Motes has never heard of Sartre, he agrees with the great atheist's claim that "man is nothing other than that which he makes of himself." "Where you come from is gone," Motes thus proclaims, "where you thought you were going to never was there, and where you are is no good unless you can get away from it. . . . In yourself right now is all the place you've got."

Place has ontological significance for Flannery O'Connor. We do not know God in unmediated relation, nor do we humanly flourish except as we are rooted in time and space, by way of commitments that have chosen us before we chose them. The murderous deed of a deracinated creature such as Hazel Motes proves to be the outward and visible sign of his inward and invisible unbelief. Multiply Motes by several million and we are left with the pervasive nihilism of our time. O'Connor made clear, therefore, that the unprecedented incinerations of the 20th century were the political consequences of a profound theological displacement. "When tenderness is detached from the source of tenderness," she wrote, "its logical outcome is terror. It ends in forced labor camps and in the fumes of the gas chamber."

Moral and religious suffering—and the attempt to avoid it—was intrinsic to O'Connor's vision. Her deadly illness did not bring it to the fore. O'Connor came, instead, to regard her lupus more as a nuisance than as her defining center. She did so by distinguishing between two kinds of seeing. If we see *with* our eyes, using them as mere optical instruments, we have only *sight*: the perception of such relatively trivial things as wealth and power and position. If we see *through* our eyes, with lenses formed by true convictions about God and man and the world, then we have *vision*. Like a latter-day Oedipus, Hazel Motes finishes as a blind man, but his burned-out eye sockets envision the enduring and invisible and ultimate things. Flannery O'Connor's life will be long remembered and her work long honored because they were imbued with just such prophetic vision. **NR**

Watts Up

IAIN MURRAY


TERRESTRIAL ENERGY
How Nuclear Power Will Lead the Green Revolution and End America's Energy Odyssey
WILLIAM TUCKER

Terrestrial Energy:
How Nuclear Power Will Lead the Green Revolution and End America's Energy Odyssey,
by William Tucker (Bartleby,
420 pp., $27.50)

FITTINGLY for a book about nuclear energy, William Tucker's latest work is a bit like uranium: It contains a vast amount of material, packed tightly into a small space, which, if released into the population at large, could generate substantial energy. Like nuclear energy, it is not without its problems, but they are easily overcome. And it will go down like a nuclear bomb with environmentalists, because it ably demonstrates that their energy arguments are worthless.

Tucker neatly divides energy sources into two types: solar and terrestrial. For virtually all of mankind's history, we have derived our power from the liberation of solar energy—energy from the sun's rays that has been captured by plant life. Initially, we used wood, releasing its stored solar energy in the form of fire. More recently, we discovered a much more concentrated form of solar energy in fossil fuels: coal, oil, and natural gas. The amount of concentrated solar energy in these fuels is amazing. One gallon of gasoline can propel a 3,000-pound vehicle for about 30 miles, a task that would exhaust large numbers of human beings.

Mr. Murray is a senior fellow at the Competitive Enterprise Institute and the author of The Really Inconvenient Truths: Seven Environmental Catastrophes Liberals Don't Want You to Know About—Because They Helped Cause Them.

Terrestrial power, on the other hand, derives its energy from the processes going on beneath our feet. Anyone who has been down a deep mineshaft knows how hot it gets down there. This is because we are nearer the areas where large amounts of uranium and thorium (left over from the Earth's creation from the remnants of a supernova, Tucker suggests) are decaying, releasing heat. By simply taking those elements out of the ground and using them to fuel power stations, just as we have done with coal for so long, we can release an even more concentrated form of energy. The energy binding the elements of that gallon of gasoline together would, if we could tap them, propel that vehicle for 60 million miles—the distance between the Earth and Mars.

Yet we are bypassing this magnificent alternative. In our search for other sources of energy we have again concentrated on solar forms. Wind power is actually the result of differences between the amounts of solar heat gathered in different parts of the atmosphere. Hydroelectric power ultimately derives from the sun's evaporating water from the oceans, which then returns to the earth as rain, which then seeks a quick return to the oceans. Even biofuels are simply a method of liberating solar energy without going through the concentration process of creating fossil fuels.

This is where, to my mind, the book is most valuable, for in its extensive discussion of the so-called "renewable" fuels, it lays bare the reasons why all the talk of environmentalists about them is just so much hype. Time and again the name of Amory Lovins, the sage of the Rocky Mountain Institute (a prominent sustainable-resources think tank), and his assertions that renewable energy is best come up. Time and again it is shown how one of his pilot programs seems to have enough potential that governments sink our money into it. And time and again Tucker demonstrates how such schemes just will not work at the scale we need them to.

My favorite example involved a Canadian who spent $12,000 installing solar panels to generate 600 watts of electricity for his log cabin (on a sunny day). That's about two-thirds the consumption of an average American home. As Tucker says, "By practicing Draconian conservation, he has been able to make the system break even. Still, he was forced to think long and hard before buying his daughter an aquarium. The oxygen pump would put too much strain on the system.”

The problem has to do with *collection* and *concentration*. Fossil fuels have already done the job of collecting and concentrating large amounts of solar energy for us. Trying to create the sort of electricity we need with wind and solar power requires vast amounts of land to be put to the collection process; the same goes for biofuels to replace gasoline. And—owing to fluctuations in wind, and to cloud cover—these sources simply don’t generate electricity all the time, which is what we need. Trying to do it with “soft power”—lots of small, renewable generators distributed throughout the economy, selling spare power back to the grid—just won’t cut it, either. Lovins, says Tucker, “saw the inefficiencies of cutting butter with a chainsaw. He didn’t see the futility of trying to cut steel with a butter knife.”

Tucker has an excellent case that, if we have to leave fossil fuels behind, we will need to use terrestrial energy—the only other source of already collected and concentrated energy we have. But *why* do we need to leave fossil fuels behind? This is the weakest part of Tucker’s case, for he accepts that global warming, caused by greenhouse gases, is, if not a crisis, something we have to take seriously. His reasons for saying so are not strong. He dismisses the important objections raised by luminaries such as Profs. Richard Lindzen, Pat Michaels, and Fred Singer rather glibly, as if he had opened the *Grist* website’s “How to Talk to a Climate Skeptic” and pulled the answers straight from there, rather than considering the questions carefully. Anyone well-read in the subject of climate science, or even climate economics, will find his chapter on global warming paper-thin.

However, it looks as if we are moving into a world where the important scientific questions about global warming have been dispensed with as, dare I say it, inconvenient, and coal as a source of electric power is no longer going to be viable. If that is the case, then we are stuck with a choice between so-called renewables and nuclear. The debate between the two needs to be conducted honestly, and this is where Tucker’s book is invaluable. As well as outlining the problems with renewables, he spends a great deal of time explaining why all the common objections to nuclear power are either cant, outdated, or misunderstandings. Anyone who read my recent NR article (“Nuclear Power?” June 16, 2008) will be familiar with them, but Tucker is able to go into a lot more detail.

In particular, Tucker is quietly devastating when it comes to anyone who advances Chernobyl, Three Mile Island, or *The China Syndrome* as reasons to oppose nuclear power. Chernobyl was almost a worst-case scenario for a nuclear accident—the plant was unshielded, the operators showed an appalling lack of regard for safety, and the response effort was botched—but even so, it produced nowhere near the effects predicted at the time. (There ended up being 60 deaths, moderate numbers of treatable cancers, and no vast radioactive wasteland.) Three Mile Island was probably the worst-case scenario when it comes to a Western nuclear reactor 30 or so years ago—no deaths, no health effects, but a very large cleanup bill. As for the worries generated by *The China Syndrome*—in which an accident threatened to leave a large area uninhabitable—Three Mile Island itself actually demonstrated that the situation described in the film just wouldn’t happen, because the incident there was almost exactly the one depicted in the movie. And, as Tucker notes, “the handling of nuclear technology has since improved by orders of magnitude.”

Tucker is quietly devastating when it comes to anyone who advances Chernobyl, Three Mile Island, or *The China Syndrome* as reasons to oppose nuclear power.

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and nuclear proliferation, Tucker ends with a visit to France, which generates nearly 80 percent of its power in nuclear reactors. France reprocesses huge amounts of ex-Soviet uranium and sells it on to us at a profit. All the waste from the entire history of French nuclear power is stored in one room. It totals ten grams for each French citizen. Those citizens are fully informed of the realities and safety of nuclear power. Why, asks Tucker, can't we be more like the French?

He actually answers himself, in one respect: He acknowledges that the dirigiste nature of French government allows it to bypass strongly held, if misguided, citizen concerns. He also acknowledges that in the U.S., nuclear power will not—and should not—get the state support the French use to make the industry economical. Yet he provides few answers to the objections of such critics as Jerry Taylor of the Cato Institute, who argues that in a truly free society nuclear power will never be economical. This is the second weak point of the book.

His view of the future is that an informed citizenry will prevail. Well, perhaps; but substantial regulatory reform will be needed to disarm the anti-nuclear movement and to reduce unnecessary delays to construction time. Otherwise, we will be stuck with solar power, in its worst forms—and find ourselves trying to cut steel with butter knives. **NR**

A Wolfe Tome

FRED SIEGEL

The Future of Liberalism, by Alan Wolfe
(Knopf, 352 pp., $25.95)

Alan Wolfe of Boston College is a prolific and generally well-regarded author. In the last five years he's published four books on contemporary politics and public policy: *The Transformation of American Religion*, *Does American Democracy Still Work?*, *Return to Greatness*, and *Is There a Culture War?* His new book, *The Future of Liberalism*, timed to coincide with the arrival of the Obama administration, tries to provide an in-depth intellectual framework for Wolfe's mildly unconventional liberal political predilections. "No one is more temperamentally conservative," he says, "than a Manhattan leftist living in a rent-controlled apartment and holding tenure." (This quip is witty enough, but it's followed by such solemnities as "Liberalism matters only because people do.")

Academics and journalists haven't been able to defend liberalism effectively, Wolfe claims, so he's had to raise his pen once again. Liberalism's core principle, he argues, is that "as many people as possible should have as much say as is feasible over the direction their lives will take." Who of any consequence in America would disagree? He goes on to insist that "the liberal proposition, tested by long experience, is that whatever dependency results from using public policy to address inequalities, the resulting gains in individual mobility, development of physical and mental capacity, and racial and gender equality far outweigh them."

The reader, seeing this definition of liberalism, might then expect a careful, grounded discussion of how different policy options have played out over time. But with the exception of his thoughtful discussion of why religion and liberalism not only are compatible in the U.S. but sometimes reinforce each other (and this is far and away the book's best chapter), the reader is led in a different direction. As Wolfe sees it, markets are what produce dependency, while rights, presumably including welfare rights, foster independence. I say presumably because at one point early in this hastily compiled book, the author lays out the argument against welfare reform—but then, many pages later, he inserts an endorsement of same into the text.

Instead of providing a careful, grounded, empirical evaluation of the welfare reforms and their implications, Wolfe mires the reader in a slough of European categories ill-aligned with the American experience. American critics of liberalism, says Wolfe early on, "rarely recognize how much they owe to Europe," and specifically to the 19th-century Spanish priest Félix Sardá y Salvany, "for the liberal bashing they find so attractive." *Who?* The how and when of the vast influence exerted by Félix Sardá y Salvany, who saw liberalism as the "evil of all evils," is left unspecified but serves as a gateway to what follows. That's the way the book is organized: It often reads as though Wolfe had poured out his note cards summarizing his reading onto the pages but wasn't sure what order they should be in.

The book has two competing conceptual threads. The first is that Rousseau is the father of modern American

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STARRY NIGHT

At the High Museum of Art, Atlanta
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He fought the demons with a tube of paint,
With knife and brush to joust—cut, thrust, and parry.
Each stroke was life or death: to drive and harry
Unceasing the dark foe, for once to faint
Would yield to black despair, the old complaint.
Rejected artist, preacher, missionary
Was more rejection than one man could carry.
In a better church, he might have been a saint.

So still the starlight pierces as it swirls
Above the silent hills and sleeping town
Behind the cypress writhing in the wind.
Again the heart its fierce defiance hurls,
In swaths of yellow, blue, and green and brown
Carves out one hour of peace before the end.

—DONALD T. WILLIAMS

conservatism—yes, you've got that right, the Rousseau who inspired the Jacobins is, according to Wolfe, the unacknowledged godfather of the Republican Right. Rousseau's emphasis on the need to hew to nature, Wolfe argues, cuts off his supposed heirs from recognizing the need to improve on nature through human artifice. The second is that liberalism has its roots in Immanuel Kant, who said that man should "dare to know"; people should, says Wolfe, "take the side of culture over nature." In this framework, both Jerry Falwell and contemporary evolutionary biologists are, with their pessimistic insistence on the limits imposed by human nature, Rousseau's heirs and hence allies of a sort. In fact, Wolfe suggests, if Rousseau were alive today, he might well have become an evolutionary social biologist. I was tempted to stop reading right there.

Wolfe says liberals should be inspired by Kant's insistence that—in Wolfe's words—"the human race ought to be and can be the master of its own fortune." Kant wants us to wage a creative struggle against our brutish nature by using our reason to "cultivate" ourselves through the "arts and sciences" that Rousseau feared. Liberalism's problem, says Wolfe, is not the absence of surefire policy proposals; it is, rather, the "failure to link liberalism's politics to the kind of generous and creative conception of human purpose associated with" Kant's vision of human possibilities.

The author does, however, acknowledge a small wrinkle, noting that Kant had praise for Rousseau. But it was far more than that: If Wolfe, who has genuinely interesting arguments to make about sociobiology, a subject to which he has clearly given considerable thought, hadn't been in such a hurry to get yet another book out, he would have taken the time to find out that Kant was actually Rousseau's most ardent admirer, bestowing upon him the august title "Newton of the moral world." Kant's philosophical efforts to develop the "categorical imperative" (the application of which he thought guaranteed ethical choices) were aimed at providing the intellectual underpinning for Rousseau's concept of the General Will—which itself helped inspire not only the Jacobins but the totalitarianisms of the 20th century.

What this has to do with modern America is not altogether clear even to Wolfe. "Conservatives," he notes, "may be discovering what they have in common with Rousseau, but not all that many on the left recognize what they ought to share with Kant. If anything, Kantian sympathies . . . remain decidedly out of fashion on the left, many of whose leading thinkers and activists oddly share the Rousseauian sentiments so prominent on the right." In which case, what has this exercise been about?

It's difficult to convey the full extent of the book's slapdash character as the author leaps between ill-argued assertions, often impaling himself on the sharper points. Wolfe, who mentions environmentalism only in passing though it occupies a central place in contemporary liberalism, writes, "The political right today shares much of the suspicion of progress held by conservatives of yesterday." But is there any significant group in American society more hostile to the ideal of progress and the humanism that goes with it than the adepts of extreme environmentalism, who thrill to the idea of an Earth without people?

"These days," says Wolfe, "one is likely to find arguments from genetics coming from the left rather than the right." But the writer of those words needs to acquaint himself with the history of the Left. The 19th-century American utopian socialists of the Oneida Colony anticipated eugenics with what they then called "stirpiculture." And in the early 20th century, their liberal and left-wing heirs preached a eugenic version of family planning packaged together with the ideal of a planned economy.

Finally, Wolfe is also chronologically challenged. He writes: "In their determination to carve out space to avoid the condemnatory moral judgments of the religious right in their personal and sexual lives, liberals adopted arguments similar to the laissez-faire propositions once used to justify economic inequalities." But arguments for free love and abortion as a matter of individual choice took hold in the 1960s; they preceded the Religious Right, they weren't a reaction to it.

It's difficult to explain why a book written by such a widely read and sometimes thoughtful writer is so disappointing. Perhaps he just writes too much. In any case, the future of liberalism is likely to rise and fall on the efficaciousness of the Obama administration, and that should and will be little affected—the chapter on religion aside—by the arguments shuffled into this book. **NR**

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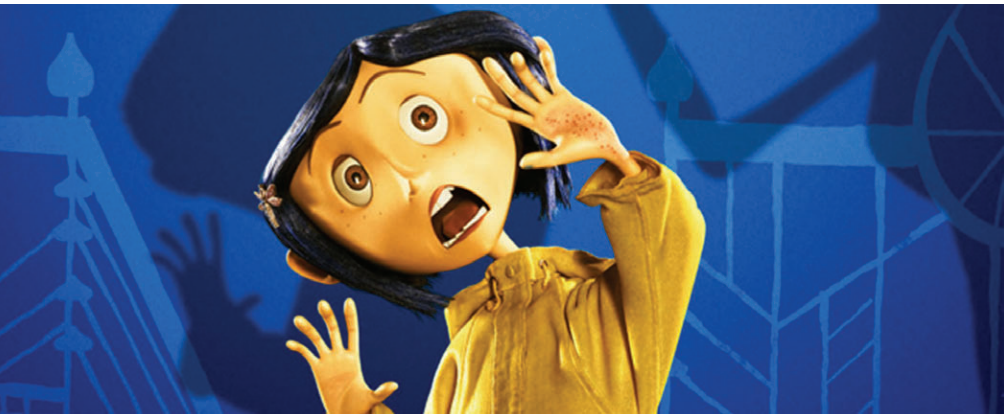
Fairy Tale and Nightmare

ROSS DOUTHAT

I DON'T know how young I was when my well-meaning parents took me to see *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*, one of the Walt Disney Company's live-action efforts from the Eisenhower era, which was being screened for some sort of kids' movie day at the local university. Young enough, certainly, that I don't recall much about the film—not the songs, not the blarney-encrusted plot, not even Sean Connery in one of his early leading roles. All I remember is the harrowing conclusion, when the banshee, the herald of death, made a spectral, fluorescent-green appearance—and close on its keening heels came the shadowy "death coach," with a headless horseman driving silhouetted steeds across mists and scudding clouds. And even these details are sketchy in my memory (I tracked down the scene on YouTube for the purposes of this review), since the moment the death coach creaked on screen I rushed wailing from the theater, my harried father close behind.



FOCUS FEATURES

Unless your preteen child is especially tough-minded, I would keep this cautionary tale in mind when trying to decide whether to take the whole family to see *Coraline*, a stop-motion-animated, 3-D-enhanced adaptation of Neil Gaiman's slim, award-winning 2002 fairy tale. It's one of the best non-Pixar children's movies of recent vintage, but it's also far and away the creepiest, woven through with uncanniness and studded with moments of pure horror. Today's younger generation is probably too jaded to quail at a banshee (especially one conjured up through the cumbersome magic of late-'50s special effects), but I'm pretty sure that there are terrors in *Coraline* capable of sending many a seven-year-old squealing for the exits.

The movie's set-up is the stuff of great stories and bad dreams. Coraline Jones (voiced by Dakota Fanning) is the resourceful, blue-haired daughter of two distracted parents, who finds herself adrift in the rambling, decaying multi-family Victorian where her family has rented an apartment. There are bizarre neighbors upstairs and down—a mustachioed, pot-bellied Russian in the attic, and two fading, coquettish actress sisters in the basement—and an annoying, motorbike-riding boy who lives next door and pals around with a prickly cat. But what Coraline wants is her parents' attention, and they're too busy writing garden catalogues (while the house's actual garden languishes untended) to notice.

What she gets instead is a secret door, bricked-up by day, that opens by night into an alternative version of her house and life, in which her "other mother" and "other father" are always loving and attentive, the neighbors put on mouse circuses and song-and-dance numbers round the clock, and the out-of-doors blooms with exotic flora that resolve, when viewed from above, into a landscaped version of Coraline's face. Amid this garden of earthly delights, the only dissonant notes are struck by the supercilious cat, who claims to be the same in both worlds although he talks only in one—and, of course, by the peculiar fact that all the people in the through-the-wall world (mothers, fathers, neighbors, and friends) have black buttons for eyes.

If that sounds creepy on paper, trust me, you have no idea. *Coraline*'s director, Henry Selick, is the man responsible for bringing Roald Dahl's phantasmagoric *James and the Giant Peach* and Tim Burton's ghoulish *The Nightmare Before Christmas* to glorious stop-motion life, so he knows how to put on a creepshow. Indeed, the movie's zeal for the grotesque is so comprehensive that it's sometimes hard to tell what's supposed be "normal" and what's supposed to be unsettling—for the audience, and, more important, for the questing Coraline, as she explores the alternative reality that her desire for parental attention seems to have summoned up.

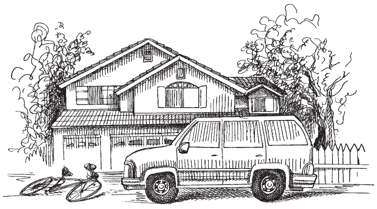
Still, by the time the heroine's "other mother" starts chowing down on a box filled with squirming beetles, it's clear that All Is Not Right in Coraline's newfound pleasure-dome. Various hair-raising developments ensue as she tries to make her escape, and the stereoscopic 3-D gets an impressive workout. (If you can see the film at a theater that issues 3-D glasses, you absolutely should.) The obvious pleasure the film takes in world-building is matched by the pleasure it takes in the unmaking of the other mother's moon-drenched paradise: It fades like a computer-generated illusion and rots like a bad apple simultaneously, even as the being responsible for its existence is gradually revealed as a dreadful combination of Cruella de Vil, J. R. R. Tolkien's dread she-spider Shelob, and the Terminator. (Like I said, the banshee had nothing on this.)

In addition to being scary, the story is busy. Gaiman's novel was spare but somewhat overplotted even so, with a few too many magical talismans and people to be rescued, and the film (as films are wont to do) has ladled on extra developments and characters, sometimes but not always to good effect. *Coraline* has all the psychological richness of a great fairy tale, but its plot could have used some refinement and rejiggering.

But then, that's how great fairy tales emerge—not all at once and fully formed, but gradually, through multiple iterations, until somebody gets them exactly right. (I'm sure the first and second tellings of Snow White and Cinderella weren't quite perfect either.) And as far as modern motion-picture forays into faerie go, this one is highly recommended. Just think twice before you bring the kids. **NR**

The Straggler

Down in the Dumps



JOHN DERBYSHIRE

Conservatives, it says here, are happier than liberals. I am looking at this much-discussed study from New York University on "The Palliative Function of Conservative Ideology." So far as I can make out—and you should by no means quote me on this; my powers of attention are not what they should be, for reasons to be explained—the conclusion of the study is that we conservatives don't fret so much about social inequality. With one less thing to fret about, we're happier. Well, that's nice. This seems to me just another shot at proving how smug and callous conservatives are, leaving those sensitive, neurasthenic souls of the other party to anguish over the wretched of the earth.

Happier we may be, in the generality, net-net and long-term, but a conservative can be as glum as you please when the mood takes him. Ay, in the very temple of the Right, veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine, as Keats did not quite say. She's fixed her cold grip on me recently, and I report to you now from beneath the sign of Saturn.

Part of it is the weather. It hasn't snowed for days, but there's been no warmth, so old, congealed, dirty snow is everywhere. Few meteorological consequences are as unsightly or depressing. The caked gray mess brings to mind the gloomier kind of Russian poet—Yesenin, perhaps—or the even gloomier Scandinavian variety. The champion here is surely Sigbjørn Obstfelder, a late-19th-century Norwegian, whose verses should *not* be read in the cold and dark: "I found a corpse between the glints of snow, / the snow candles, / a corpse, still living, / a poor frostbitten starling . . ." And that was a *Christmas* poem!

Another part is work. I am preparing a book for the presses. These late stages of dealing with the editor's comments and suggestions bring one face to face with one's own faults of spelling, grammar, usage, punctuation, style, and structure. It's necessary work, and a routine part of the book-production process, but as a lesson in one's own fallibility, it's humbling . . . which is only a pace or two away from being humiliating. I ought to be inured to this, having had much sterner lessons in human imperfection during my days as a computer programmer. No matter how carefully you check and test, there's always one misplaced comma in your code that brings the company's overnight processing cycle to a juddering halt, followed by an irate 3 A.M. call from the data center.

And some other part is temperamental. The old four-humors model of personal character was not completely misguided, and there are plenty of melancholics here on the political right, whatever those NYU researchers think they have found. Churchill had his "black dog" (a phrase he took from Dr. Johnson, another conservative depressive); Teddy Roosevelt nursed that odd enthusiasm for the wistful, death-haunted poems of E. A. Robinson; and the great Tory anarchist Enoch Powell, asked by an interviewer in his old age how he would like to be remembered, stunned the radio audience by replying: "I should like to have been killed in the war."

Glum people have not had a good press, though. Dante put them at the bottom of the Styx, where:

> Fix'd in the slime they say: "Sad once
> were we
> In the sweet air made gladsome by
> the sun,
> Carrying a foul and lazy mist within:
> Now in these murky settlings are
> we sad."

C. S. Lewis, perhaps with Dante in mind, made the pessimistic Puddleglum an inhabitant of the marshes. (The character is supposed to have been based on Lewis's gardener.)

The gold standard for commentary on the blues is Robert Burton's 1621 *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Dr. Johnson said it was the only book that ever got him out of bed two hours earlier than he wished to rise, though he thought it "overloaded with quotation." Burton gives melancholy a thorough work-over: symptoms, causes, cures. He covers both nature and nurture, with especially lurid descriptions of congenital melancholy. Old men's children, he tells us, are "most apt to this disease," while "foolish, drunken, or hare-brained women most part [*sic*] bring forth children like unto themselves, morose and languid." Most ill-favored of all are the offspring of a menstruous coupling: "Those luckless ones begotten at this period of lunar influence are commonly mad, doting, stupid, ailing, filthy, impotent, plague-ridden, of the lowest vitality, & robbed of all strength of mind & body." Good grief!

Burton offers plenty of cures. For love melancholy, forgetfulness; for religious melancholy, resignation. The golden rule in all cases, he tells us, is "Be not solitary, be not idle." He actually recommends mathematics as a distraction: "Extract a square root, or study Algebra. . . . By this art you may examine how many men may stand one by another in the whole superficies of the Earth, some say 148,456, 800,000,000." Who were those "some," I wonder?

Modern mind science suggests that melancholics may be seeing things more clearly than the smiley-face multitude. Researchers S. Taylor and J. Brown ("Illusion and Well-Being," 1988) found that mentally healthy people are better at self-deception: "It appears to be not the well-adjusted individual but the individual who experiences subjective distress who is more likely to process self-relevant information in a relatively unbiased and balanced fashion." So the more depressed and maladjusted you are—up to a point, surely—the more likely it is that you are seeing things right, without bias.

Well, we gloomsters all know *that*! It's one of life's trade-offs, truth for happiness. Smile away, suckers. But then . . . wouldn't that mean that all those happy conservatives in the NYU study are . . . wrong?

The heck with it. The snow is still dirty, but the sky is clear and bright, with no wind. I shall go for a walk in the woods, "in the sweet air made gladsome by the sun," and cherish the sunlit world I am privileged to lease a small portion of for a short span. I shall count my numerous blessings as I walk, look for signs of spring, and ignore dead starlings. There'll be no murky settlings for me. Begone, dull care! **NR**

Happy Warrior BY MARK STEYN

Governor Gravid

The *Times* of London put it this way: “Arnie Schwarzenegger Joins the Ranks of Girlie Men.”

Quite. As is well known, the Terminator has been unable to terminate anything—not even the impact study group studying the impact of expanding the Department of Impact Studies. The man who walloped his predecessor for fiscal profligacy has managed to preside over a California budget that’s expanded 40 percent (so far) since the good old Gray days. Sacramento is piling on an extra million-and-three-quarter dollars of debt every hour, 24/7. The Golden State is a foldin’ state, going out of business—a far cry from when Ahnuld arrived as a penniless immigrant in a land of plenty. Now he’s an immigrant of plenty in a penniless land. Another Californian actor-governor famously observed that “we are a nation that has a government, not the other way around.” In Collyvornya, it’s the other way round. Doing your ’08 tax return? If you’re expecting a refund, Sacramento’s stopped the check: Instead you receive an IOU saying they’ll get around to it when they can. On the other hand, if you owe them money, don’t expect reciprocal treatment. As the governor’s celebrated catchphrase has it: “Ah’ll be back—for more of your money.”

Ah, well. I supported him at the time. Don’t know why. In a field of Arnie, Cruz Bustamante, Arianna Huffington, Larry Flynt, etc., etc., I should probably have plumped for Angelyne, the non-singing non-dancing non-acting “celebrity” famous for doing nothing except displaying her embonpoint on Los Angeles billboards. True, her cleavage isn’t as impressive as Ahnuld’s, but whose is? If I sound bitter, I shouldn’t be. Governor Schwarzenegger is merely the latest “fiscally conservative, socially liberal” mirage to dissolve from shimmering oasis to bottomless toxic swamp. Usually this beast roams the East Coast—see Christie Whitman, George Pataki, William Weld, and others you forgot to remember. I see the nice Maine ladies, Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins, were hailed for reaching across the aisle on the “stimulus” bill by William Cohen, who helpfully explained to the *Washington Post* that Pine Tree Staters are “liberal on social issues and conservative on fiscal matters.” And nothing says “fiscally conservative” like voting for a trillion dollars of pork after you’ve stayed up three nights in a row carefully weeding out the $473.84 that shouldn’t have been in there.

A “social liberal/fiscal conservative” is not necessarily a girly-man, more of a pre-op transsexual. It would be nice to be able to have it both ways, like that so-called “pregnant man” out on the West Coast—and, incidentally, didn’t Ahnuld play a pregnant man in some movie a decade or so back? Why, so he did: *Junior*. I remember the poster, the leading man with a swollen belly—like a girly-man governor about to give birth to a big bloated budget. The problem with being “socially liberal, fiscally conservative” is that most of the social liberalism comes with quite a price tag—just have a ten-minute riffle through the non-stimulus bill. We all want to move beyond “the standard left/right paradigm,” as Arianna liked to say in that gubernatorial race. If I had a pair o’ dime for every time a politician has said we need to move beyond the old paradigm, I could afford to live in Arnold’s California. But the reality is that almost every “socially liberal, fiscally conservative” politician turns out to be fiscally liberal—in the same way that, if you mix half a pint of vanilla ice cream with half a pint of horse manure, it’s not hard to figure which taste will predominate.

To be fair to Ahnuld, a lot of voters want it both ways, too. Which is why “fiscal” is not a useful word in this context. Big Government is not primarily a “fiscal” issue: These programs are not wrong because they’re unaffordable; they’re unaffordable because they’re wrong—they’re not the proper role of government, and if you pretend they are, then, as in California, you unbalance the relationship between the citizen and the state. But it’s not a green-eyeshade thing: They would be just as wrong, as I said a month or two back, if Bill Gates wrote a check to cover them every month. So when a politician tells you he’s “fiscally” conservative, it’s like Conan the Barbarian announcing he’ll bring his abacus to a sword fight.

That’s the missing element in the bailoutapalooza. For six months now, Paulson, Geithner, and the gang have talked about it as a kind of technical correction, a recalibration that will re-inflate the credit bubble and get us back to “normal.” But it’s not about the arithmetic, it’s about restoring the concept of “moral hazard” that is vital to any functioning market but which the “socially liberal/fiscally conservative” circle-squarers have all but rendered extinct. No government can guarantee universal homeownership, or absurd returns on mediocre assets as a permanent feature of life. And to attempt to do so is to strip language of meaning. You’re debauching the currency—not in the “fiscal” exchange-rate nickel-’n’-dime sense, but something more profound: the very currency of liberty—property, contract, citizenship, responsibility.

There was another muscle man who ran into trouble long ago: Antaeus. Big tough guy. No girly-man. Slew all comers—as long as his feet were planted firmly on the ground. But, as Hercules figured out, get him up in the air, unmoored, unrooted, and he turned into a big sack of nothing. There’s a lesson there, and not just for Conan in La-La Land. **NR**

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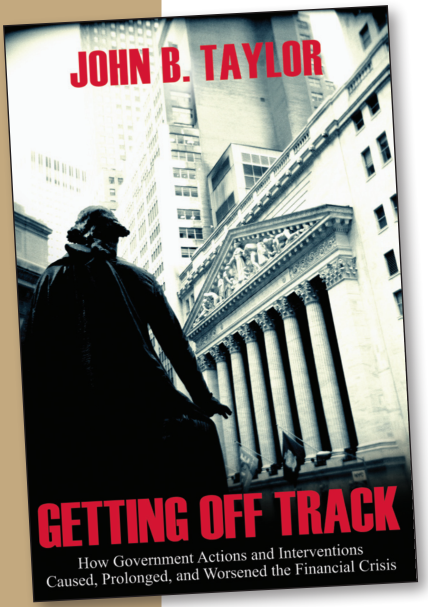

JOHN B. TAYLOR

GETTING OFF TRACK

How Government Actions and Interventions Caused, Prolonged, and Worsened the Financial Crisis

Getting Off Track

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by John B. Taylor

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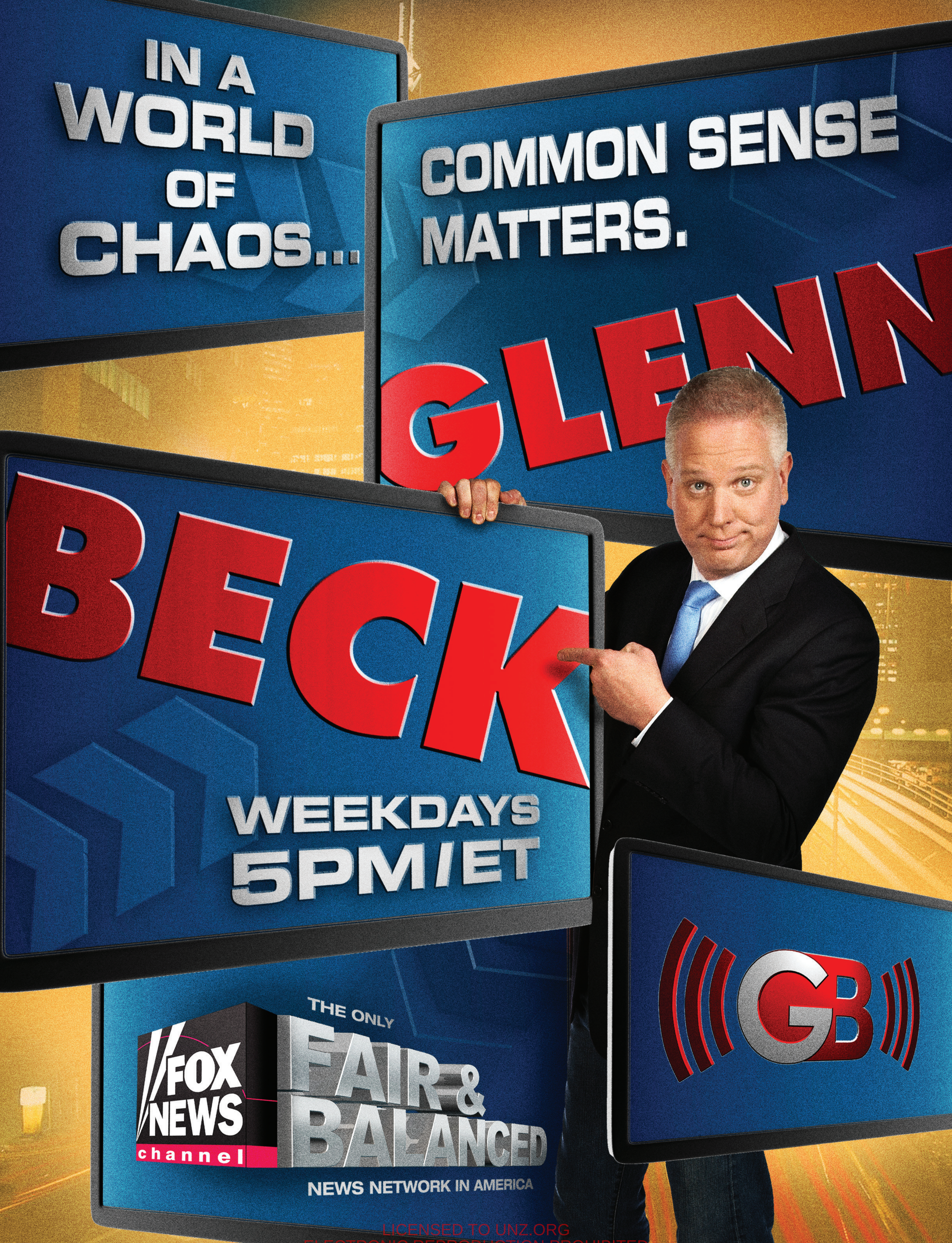

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